



BRITISH RULE IN INDIA.

BRITISH RULE IN INDIA;

A HISTORICAL SKETCH.

BY

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

"A nation of shopkeepers."—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

"Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of humankind pass by,
Intent on high designs."—GOLDSMITH.

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PREFACE.

THE *Times* of September 16th, 1857, begins its leading article thus. "It is not saying much, perhaps, but there are few countries and few histories about which the English know less than they do about India." Whether this statement is true in its whole breadth or not, it expresses the view under which this volume was proposed by myself, and encouraged by persons who are better judges than I can be of the amount of existing knowledge of India and its affairs. The aim of the work, and the treatment of its subject, are as humble as can well be. I simply wish to put in the way of others a convenience which I should often have been glad of myself for obtaining a general notion of what our Indian empire is, how we came by it, and what has gone forward in it since it first became connected with England. I have adhered strictly to the object of the book, because I had not scope for anything beyond narrative. To form a judgment on past transactions, and speculations on future destinies, would have been at least as interesting to myself as relating

events: but it is not what is most wanted at the present moment. A clear conception of past incidents and of the present field of action is the first requisite. Political criticism and speculation must necessarily follow, and be the great national business of the coming time; and that time will be when "the tempest and whirlwind of our passion" under our present calamity have run their course. Our hearts are palpitating too strongly at this moment to leave our judgment free and fair. When the emotion has calmed down, no doubt the natural effect of all powerful emotion will appear in the strengthening and enlightening of the judicial, inventive and reflective faculties, and India will be governed incomparably better than it has ever been yet. But the English people have much to do before that stage is reached; and the very first thing to be done, in order to will and act worthily, and even to mourn duly and righteously, is to learn the broad facts of Anglo-Indian history. As these facts are scarcely to be had but by the study of bulky works, and of many of them, I have attempted a brief sketch which may be better than nothing to many who have little leisure, and may serve as an introduction to further study to those who have more.

H. M.

AMBLESIDE,
October 1857.

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CHAPTER I.

THE TERRAIN.

1593.

"It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain, outstretched in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant: from his side two rivers flowed,
One winding, th' other straight, and left between
Fair champaign with less rivers intertwined:
Hugh cities and high-towered, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs; and so large
The prospect was, that here and there was room
For barren desert, fountainless and dry."—MILTON.

WHAT is the British India which is now, per force, occupying so much of our thoughts and conversation? Hitherto we have, for the most part, been satisfied with very vague notions of what our great Asiatic dependency is like, and of how we came by it, and of the precise nature and extent of our concern with it. We have regarded it as the business of a particular class of our society to understand and transact Indian affairs, while the great majority

might fairly admit the whole subject of that remote, and odd, and troublesome settlement of ours to be very tiresome, and one which might be left to those who understood it. The time for this kind of insolent negligence is past—suddenly brought to an end by calamity, which may probably have been engendered by that very selfishness. We shall all have to bear our share in the efforts and sacrifices which this calamity will impose on the nation; and we might all be glad, at the present moment, to know as much as every "old Indian" whom we have been accustomed to let alone with his speciality. It will do us no harm, therefore, to look a little into this matter, to brush up such knowledge as we may ever have had, and to gain somewhat more, however cursorily, as to what British India is, how we came there, and what our relations have been with it, up to the present day.

It is not difficult to choose a stand-point of place and time from which to ascertain what our great dependency is like. The time which suits us best is that in which an Englishman first landed on the coast to trade. The place must be that which is best suited for the widest survey.

The central part of Asia is a table-land, believed to be, in its highest platform, ten thousand feet above the sea level. The descent of the land to the sea is variously accomplished in the different maritime countries of Asia, but nowhere more im-

pressively than in that which belongs to us. The subsidence of the land from 10,000 to 1,000 feet above the sea is made by a steep slope, like a diversified wall with embrasures, covering an area of from 90 to 120 miles in breadth, and running a line of 1,500 miles. The area of this embankment is not less than 150,000 square miles. From a time beyond record the ridge of this slope has been called by the people who live below it the *Abode of Cold*, or of *Snow*—Himálaya. With them this was not a mere figure of speech; for, high up above the clouds, where adventurous trespassers found the air hardly fit for mortal breathing, dwells the god (not the least in a pantheon of many millions) who is the *Father of the Ganges*, and father-in-law of Siva, the Destroyer. For many millions of years the god lived in repose, watching over his great progeny of rivers from his solitude, approached no nearer than by the few herdsmen who came up from either side after their goats which had browsed the slopes of thyme and marjoram too high; or by the daring traders who, with mountain sheep for their beasts of burden, threaded the passes with their woven fabrics, or with camel's hair or silky wool. But now, intrusion has become so common, the secret of the rarity of the atmosphere is so vulgarised, and our countrymen have such a propensity to live above the clouds in the hottest weather, that we need not scruple to mount to the *Abode of Cold*—to the very palace of

the old divinity—and use his stand-point, and borrow his eyes, for our survey of our own dominions lying below.

Turning first to the right, we see (with eyesight, however, many times magnified) nothing but high table-land, stretching westwards beyond Persia itself —a table-land fringed with the Affghanistan peaks which we have no concern with at present—our period being that in which our first trader set foot on the shore below; that is, in 1593. Looking nearer, we see five rivers gushing from the embrasures of the great wall—from the ravines of the mountain range. Having flowed from sacred lakes in Thibet, these rivers are holy in their way; and the territory they enclose is rich and populous in comparison with that outside. We look down on some busy scenes in the Punjaub, even three centuries ago; while the Sandy Valley through which the Indus rolls his strong body of waters shows no life, except where parties of fighting men are on the way to pillage their enemies, and lay waste the villages which rise up round the wells. East of the five rivers, the Himálaya slope becomes lovely. Averaging four or five thousand feet in height, it presents now forests of the stern woodland character of the north; and now vast expanses of grass and wild flowers; and then dark ravines, leading down to sunny platforms, where the solitary Englishman below would have found

it hard to believe that his countrymen would hereafter set up their homes by hundreds. Clouds are floating below, tier beneath tier, and stray vapours dim the sun at any moment: yet even here, monkeys abound in the woods, and butterflies, measuring nine inches between the tips of their wings, light on the flowers in the pastures. There is no finer sight for the ordinary human eye than standing up there, at sunrise or sunset, and waiting for openings in the clouds below, to survey the great plain of India, too vast for diversity of colour, but stretching into the sky in one boundless expanse of purple, except where the level rays of the sun strike upon some eminence lofty enough to be thus distinguishable. Assuming the vision of the old god of the region, what do we see, as he saw it three centuries ago?

Immediately below is a belt of jungle, fringing the slope where it meets the plain; and, stretching forward from it, a region of tropical growths, caused and preserved by the umbrageous character of the woodland. Prodigious trees are bound together by creepers which shake out their blossoms a hundred feet from the ground. Tree-ferns remind us of an older time than even Hindoo tradition reaches; and the grass is so tall that the elephants are heard and felt by their tread before they are seen. In the beds of shrunken streams the oleanders blossom, and the apricot and pomegranate ripen

in the sunny spaces. This is still high ground in comparison with that which lies near the sea; and none in India is more sacred in the eyes of its inhabitants. The land, as it slopes northwards from the Jumna, is strewn with temples, and traversed by groups of pilgrims, coming up to worship. From the sandy western plains to the watery eastern region of Bengal stretches this rich plateau, through which run the prodigious rivers of Upper India, and where the great cities on their banks tell of the old glories of Hindoos and Mohammedans alike. Traditions tell of Canoge which covered an area equal to modern London; and of the greatness of Delhi, Agra, Cawnpore, and many others. From our perch we look down on them, and see what those millions of natives are doing, before they begin to dream of seeing white faces among them as their masters. In the well-drained fields of this upper surface, the husbandmen are sowing their grain seeds all mixed, or pulling them up separately, with infinite waste of time and produce. Others are more wisely leading water from the tanks among the dry ridges. Under the trees there is a loom here and there, the rude arrangement of sticks above a little pit, by which the fine muslins for turbans and female garments, or the gay and tasteful shawl fabrics are to come out, as if by magic. Within the woods, the herdsmen are burning the jungle grass in

order to procure a fresh growth for their animals; and the hunters are distributed in a circle to take account of the wild beasts which will be thus dislodged. The sacred Ganges is all alive with boats; and along its margin are companies of the devout at their ablutions, with here and there an aged or sick sufferer awaiting death from the stream. In the towns, the people are like towns-people everywhere—bargaining in the bazaars, salaaming in the temples, prostrating themselves in the palaces; while, in the domestic courtyards, the women are grinding corn in the handmill, and neighbours sit in a circle at evening, to listen to interminable tales—enjoying the literature of fiction in its primitive style. This is the region now most interesting to us, under the fearful transition of an after-time.

What lies below and to the east of this plateau? The basin of the Ganges, a watery realm, where, in seasons of inundation, the villages are seen crowning eminences, like islands amidst the waste of waters, while the tops of the forests are swaying under the gush of the currents and eddies. In the dry season when the waters are lowest, the people resort to the shade of these forests; the wild beasts slink into the covert again from the hills; the rice-fields grow green, and the pestilence drives the rural population to the towns, or a boat life on the great rivers. The highest social cultivation is in this district, where

there is somewhat less superstition, more industry, more art, and more communication with varieties of men. The further side of this basin is formed by the high land beyond the Burrampooter, which limits to the east the territory which we are surveying. Thus have we overlooked the domain of Hindostan Proper, or the Bengal Presidency, as we call it now, viz., the area extending from the Himálaya to the Vindhya mountains in one direction, and from the Burrampooter to the Indus in the other.

If ever a realm was dignified by its boundaries, it is this. Nature's mightiest barricades hedge it in; northward, mountains never yet scaled; round the shores, an ocean never yet fathomed, and brooded over by the irresistible monsoon; and these mountain and ocean barriers connected by rivers of a magnitude kindred to both. The Burrampooter and the Indus are indeed gulfs brimming with rushing seas; and where they reach the ocean they threaten to melt down the continent into it. Their deltas are, indeed, fit only for amphibious creatures, with which man can establish no understanding; so that in entering India by them the sensation is like that of travelling back into a pre-adamite age from the scenes of common life.

Looking southwards, the Vindhya mountains might seem to the people of the valleys a barrier cutting off Hindostan Proper from the true peninsula of India; but the god in his "Abode of Snow"

may overlook them, and survey the Deccan. This barrier stretches not quite from sea to sea, but from the Gulf of Cambay to the Ganges, on its descent into its basin. Looking over the range—and it is little more than 2,000 feet at the highest—what do we find next? A deep pit dug by torrents in the black soil of the peninsula—a rich narrow valley in which the Nerbudda flows from east to west: and then comes another and a lower range, and another great river, the Taptee, the last of such magnitude which flows westwards. From the deep valleys of these rivers we see the land rise, terrace beyond terrace, till, at 1,000 miles from the Nerbudda, the plateau is 3,000 feet above the sea. It is not horizontal, for it slopes down from west to east; and it is not altogether level, for its plains show some shallow undulations, and round the outer edge little hills are grouped and scattered, their recesses being filled with forest. Otherwise that whole staircase of terraces spreads, open and treeless—a vast expanse of grass and crops after the rains, and of brown burnt surface in spring—with towns scattered here and there, and thousands of villages; and near the sources of rivers, mighty Hindoo temples, to which trains of pilgrims are converging from all quarters. Each great river has its deep cleft, worn in the soft soil by the flow of waters for ages; and the plateau thus drained cannot be irrigated from rivers running so far below. Therefore the inha-

bitants are busy about their tanks, and the channel
which lead their waters over the fields in thos
districts which have been least disturbed by war.

Who makes war? The sovereigns whose palace
show themselves above the other abodes of the grea
cities make war sometimes—even often; but th
everlasting peace-breakers live in those strongholds
those *droogs*, which crown the hills at the edge o
the plateau. The marauding chiefs of the Decca
take refuge in those fortresses with their booty, whe
they have made a raid among the villages. The
little suspect that the landing of a solitary English-
man on the coast down below has determined th
fate of those robber-castles of the Deccan, and tha
within three centuries they will be crumbling ruins
telling of the atrocities of the age preceding th
British occupation of India.

Lying before us in the glare of a tropical sun, thi
plateau darkens with vegetation towards its furthe
extremity. The high corner of the south-west i
darkest, for there the clouds gather first above th
heights which are like the rim of a tray to thi
table-land; and under those clouds the forests are
grandest. Narrowing as it rises towards the south,
the platform is rounded off before it reaches the sea.
A chasm of lower land, the Gap of Coimbatore,
lies beyond; and beyond that more hills, the last of
which run into the sea as a promontory at Cape
Comorin. Is there anything beyond but the broad

sea with its white surf, dashing up against the apex of this vast triangle? Looking to the eastward of that apex, we see the loveliest of islands, anchored fast by its central mountain, but otherwise looking as if it would float away before any breeze which might fill the foliage of its woods as if it were sails. Fringed with palms, fragrant with spices, gaudy with tropical flowers, a perfect Eden for luscious fruits, Ceylon rises on the south-eastern horizon of that Indian territory, the northern boundary of which is the *Abode of Snow*. It is nearly 2,000 miles from the one to the other. What would the adventurer on the coast have said, if told that his great-grandson might come on his track, and find all this territory in English occupation, and the greater part in possession?

But we have not seen quite all. What is below the rim of the plateau — between it and the sea? There is, on the western side, a strip of land, hot and moist, from sixty to thirty miles broad, easily reached from the sea, but not so easily from the plateau above. The great embankment which supports the table-land of the Deccan is a miniature of the Himálaya range, which supports the plateau of Thibet. A mere rim on the inside—it is a precipice of two or three thousand feet deep on the seaward side. There are few roads down these Ghauts; and, till the British showed the way, it was scarcely possible for the people on the shore to obtain the produce

of the Deccan. It was on that strip of shore that our pioneer Englishman, Stevens, landed in 1593. He saw that steep wall bristling with forests—bamboos waving in the breeze which passed over the summits, and teak-trees being tumbled down by the torrents in their leaping course, after the rains; but he knew nothing of what lay behind that great green wall. The sandy beach of that Malabar coast bristles with cocoa palms, which make a fringe for the margin of the tide. The waterfalls of the Ghauts join the sea by a multitude of small inlets; and here and there a rice-swamp makes a gap in the long hedge of palms. A rocky island of small extent, lying close under a larger island, was an object of attention to our pioneer countryman while on that coast. The Portuguese had obtained it from the potentates of the mainland, valuing it for the goodness of its harbour on that exposed coast, and expressing that value in its name—Good Bay, or Bombay. The Coromandel coast, answering on the east to the Malabar on the west, is less strong in its distinctive features, except the assault of the sea on the shore. The Madras surf is celebrated all over the world. As for the rest, the Ghauts are lower, more broken, and more spread; the line of coast is broader; and all the great rivers, from the Taptee southward, fall into the sea on that coast. South of the basin of the Ganges, five noble streams pour their floods into the Bay of Bengal. The Mahanuddy; the great

Godavery, which cuts a channel for itself right across the Deccan; the Kistna, which does the same lower down; the Panaar; and the Cauvery, which washes the walls of a series of great cities, from Seringapatam to Negapatam. That part of the peninsula is little more than 300 miles wide. In the northern part of this great territory, from the Indus to the Burrampooter, it is not less than 1,500.

What a territory it is!—that which is now British India, but which our pioneer of 1593 would no more have dreamed of our making our own than the Garden of Eden, or the dominions of Prester John! He would have been no less astonished if he could have known that such a territory, being once our own, and the largest dependency ever held by any nation, would not be considered worth study by the British at home till calamity, arising from that levity, should make every nook and corner of it as fearfully interesting to the people at large as the interior of Africa to the Parks of Peebles, and the Polar regions to the Franklins and Kanes. When Stevens returned from having set foot on the coast of Malabar, his countrymen could not hear enough of the great peninsula. Now that it has long been our own, we have not cared enough about it to help our rulers to govern it well. It is time for repentance and amendment.

CHAPTER II.

ANTECEDENTS.

B.C. 4000 *—A.D. 1593.

> "Thus thou hast seen one world begin and end,
> And Man as from a second stock proceed.
> Much thou hast yet to see."—MILTON.

IF a merchant from Japan were to land in a European port, on a commercial speculation, and be told in a dream that his countrymen would, within three generations, become possessed of the whole continent, except Russia, he would think it the very wildest dream that had ever visited his sleep. Yet a parallel dream, during Stevens's first night at Goa, would have been a true prophecy.

Major Rennell first turned our attention to the relative magnitude of Europe and British India. Rectifying his statement, in accordance with recent changes, we find that our Indian empire slightly exceeds in area, while falling little short in population, the whole of Europe, exclusive of Russia.†

* Hindoo computation.

† Excluding Russia, the excess of the Indian area is 144,150 square miles; and the excess of the European population is under 19,000,000.

It is a great and marvellous conception, even after a century of such feelings as must be excited by an extension of dominion unmatched (all conditions being considered) in history. This vast territory is the abode of nations as numerous and as different from each other in character and language as the nations of Europe. If we lose sight of this, and lump them together as "natives of India," declaring ourselves unable to recognise any difference between one and another, we are simply emulating the ignorance of Asiatics in their occasional travels in the west. They do not know an Italian from a German—a Frenchman from an Englishman; and we may conceive what would be the chances of success of an Asiatic government of Europe which should proceed on such a view. The main point of education for Anglo-Indian service is the understanding of the conditions and qualities of the peoples to be governed; but that kind of preparation has never had the advantage of popular intelligence and sympathy at home. Nobody has felt an interest in what Indian officials have had to study; nobody has cared to hear what Anglo-Indians have had to tell; and now, when our great dependency is in a state of serious, though partial revolt, most of us at home have everything to learn, when we ought to have been able to judge, suggest, and insist, through the carefully gathered experience and vigilant observation

of a hundred years. It is probably a new i to most of us that our Indian empire is al as large and populous as Europe, and inclu as many nations, with their languages. W Stevens, who had joined a party of Portug to reach Goa, saw what he could from the he probably formed a more just estimate of great peninsula than we have hitherto done; now, stern events are awakening the interest w has slumbered too long.

What made Stevens go to Goa? One of agents of the Russian trading company to In was a man of English birth, who had seven ti gone down the Volga, and by the Caspian Persia to Hindostan; what he saw of the we of India, and of the scope for commercial advent there, became known to Stevens, who found eno that was wonderful and tempting to make a stimulating narrative as soon as he got ho Everybody read his book, and the nation bec extremely eager to obtain a commercial foot under the shadow of the Moguls. News from ot wanderers began to come in. Of a party of fi travellers who had gone to see what they co see, one, named Storey, remained as a monk am the Portuguese at Goa; another, Newberry, d on his way back; a third, Leedes, accepted serv under the Emperor Akbar; and only the four Fitch, came home. The London merchants beg

their scheme of a company (from which our East India Company has grown) before the new century came in. They raised money, laid plans, and sought Government aid; but the 16th century closed before they could bring their scheme to bear. While awaiting the founding of our first factory, we must therefore survey the new region of society, thus strangely disclosed, with the eyes of Stevens, at Goa, or of Leedes, at Delhi; perhaps of both, as the one certainly saw Hindostan Proper, and the other, no doubt, more or less of the Deccan—regions as distinct, to say the least, as eastern and western Europe. It ought to be at least as interesting to us as it could be to these early adventurers to know who the inhabitants of India were, and what they were like; because we understand what they could never have dreamed of—that our institutions and methods, as rulers in India, must take shape and colour, more or less, from those which were bequeathed to us by our predecessors. It is but little that can be told in such space as can be spared for the purpose here; but the most superficial retrospect ought to be full of instruction.

Behind the history of the Hindoos lies a dim region in which even speculation gropes, and can make no way. Somebody was there, in that singularly fenced region, before the Hindoos came down (as the learned tell us they did) through

the passes from Central Asia: and now and then an ancient monument turns up, or a gem of law or tradition dropped from its setting, or a philological hint sends a flash of disclosure through the darkness of antiquity—all indicating that the predecessors of the Hindoos were wise at a time when the whole earth is supposed to have been barbarous, and that there was at least one great country which swarmed with an organized society in days when we are apt to fancy deep calling to deep, and wildernesses resting in perpetual silence, before Man had appeared to awaken all the voices of Nature. Ascending no higher, it seems to be admitted on all hands that the ancient Hindoos were near the top of the scale of nations in civilization. Their institutions must have been strongly rooted to have stood their ground as they did, under the rule of their Mohammedan conquerors, even so late as Leedes's residence at the Delhi Court; and it is said to be something singular in the history of nations that an idolatry should have been sustained against a comparatively pure religion, as theirs was against Mohammedanism under the Mogul emperors. However that might be, a good observer could easily point out such modifications as the presence of the conquerors had caused in the ideas and manners of the Hindoos, while the wonder was that those modifications were so few and of such minor importance. The bulk of the population was

Hindoo; and the Mohammedan element was almost as distinct as the European is now. This does not imply that Hindoo institutions and manners were not very much changed from their primitive type; but the changes must be imputed much more to the indigenous faults of the antique polity than to the operation of foreign influences. The long duration of the general polity was owing, no doubt, to the large proportion of municipal institutions to the central despotism; but, under a religion which encouraged a passive condition of mind and life, and an institution of caste which obstructed improvement from within, and excluded it from without, deterioration was inevitable, whether it came sooner or later.

Whatever may have been the origin of the Hindoos, and however erroneous their own belief concerning it may be considered, that belief, from time immemorial, has been that Hindostan Proper—the country between the Vindhya mountains and the Himalaya—is their native home. It is to them the "Holy Land;" and they deny that the Deccan has any right to share the title. To say the least, they were nearly at the head of human civilization for a thousand years before our era. Modern scholars are disposed to think that the culminating point of the Hindoo empire, taking all conditions together, was just before the appearance of Alexander the Great on their frontier, though their literature and arts reached a higher perfection afterwards. But little

can be alleged with any certainty prior to the sions which followed the rise of Mohammed

The Prophet's own wars, and those carri in his name after his death, were on the successful in Persia, and onwards to Cabul further eastward still, till they met the thoro organized resistance of the Hindoo priesthood. faiths and their priests had gone down befo Prophet's sword and battle cry. Here wa which had the support of the throne on th hand, and popular devotedness on the other; the new proselytising religion was nearer m its match in India than it had ever been The conservatism of the Hindoo polity was antagonist for Mussulman fanaticism. The tho amalgamation of the Hindoo faith with the national and individual life rendered speedy c sion impossible, and made it clear that by vi alone could any empire over the people of Hin be obtained and preserved. Thus was the of Mohammedanism in India slower and more cult than anywhere else, long after it had m lodgment within the territory; the lapse of tending, meanwhile, to relax the forces of fana and to turn the warriors of the Prophet from a into politicians and princes.

Existing evidence seems to show that the onset was made by a Hindoo potentate, the of Lahore, in the tenth century, from alarm

encroachments of the Mohammedans established at Ghuznee, under the rule of the father of Sultan Mahmoud. The Ghuznee ruler had the advantage, and Sultan Mahmoud so improved it as to be called the Conqueror of India. While our Canute was blessing England by exalting religion above the clergy, Sultan Mahmoud was making his twelve idol-breaking incursions among the Hindoos, overthrowing their temples, and insulting the idolaters whom he could not convert. He did not establish any regular government in Hindostan, so that the people rushed to their temples as soon as his back was turned; and the dynasty of the intruders was changed, and more than a century and a half had passed, before the conquest became real and permanent. It was not till 1193, when our Cœur-de-Lion was fighting against the children of the Prophet in the Holy Land of Christendom, that the Mohammedans took real possession of the Holy Land of the Hindoos, and set up their banner and their throne at Delhi. Mohammed, the first King of Delhi, stands in Arab history as the founder of the Prophet's empire in Hindostan. Genghis Khan swept past the frontiers of Hindostan repeatedly, but did not enter it. Other Mogul chiefs did, however; and then the Affghan princes reigned at Delhi, and, by the hands of one of them, conquered a chief part of the Deccan. At about the time when Bolingbroke was enforcing the abdication of our Richard II.,

Timur was dethroning the now feeble kings of Delhi. He merely marched through Hindostan to effect this purpose, and left it to his successors to establish a Mogul dynasty there. This was done by his descendant Baber, who took possession of the throne at Delhi in 1526, and founded the Mogul empire in India, extending his dominion to the Ganges, but not improving the condition of his dominions. This was done by Akbar, whose long reign was a blessing to the Hindoos, in comparison with every other since the followers of the Prophet entered their country. His toleration was so great as to contrast favourably with the bigotry of some of the contemporary monarchs of Christendom; for instance, our Queen Mary, whose zeal was waxing and her life waning when Akbar took his seat on the Delhi throne; and the successor of Charles V., who was retiring into his convent just when Akbar was making provision for liberty of opinion among his idolatrous subjects. As always happens in such cases, Akbar was accused of infidelity by his own priests; but his life and his memory were dear to all others. While Wolsey was establishing his influence over our Henry VIII., Akbar, the prince of Mohammedan, as Henry once promised to be of Christian, chivalry, was keeping his high clergy at arm's length, and making himself the protector of the ignorant and the poor against all oppression by all priesthoods. A more gallant monarch, or one more exemplary (when his first wild youth

was passed), or more philosophical in his cabinet, while a true knight in the field, is not upon record in the whole course of history. Queen Elizabeth might be proud of her correspondents if she chanced to write to Henri Quatre and to Akbar on the same day. Leedes and his comrades carried a letter from her to the Emperor at Delhi: and it is probable that Akbar was as eager to hear from his English follower all details of our Queen's good government as the English certainly were to learn from Stevens and Fitch whatever they could tell on their return of the empire and rule of Akbar, the great Mogul.

When Leedes took service at Delhi, Akbar had received the submission of all but one of the princes north of the Vindhya mountains, and on both sides of the Indus; so that he was at liberty to turn southwards, and subjugate the Deccan. Dissensions among the rulers there invited his interposition; but an Indian Joan-of-Arc rendered his task difficult. Chand Bibi, the greatest of Indian heroines, fought in the breach at Ahmednugger, in complete armour, though veiled. Leedes must have heard the Delhi bards tell the stories of her feats at arms on behalf of her infant nephew, which have been the delight of all succeeding generations of listeners; how she loaded her guns first with all her copper coins, then with silver money, and then with gold, and lastly with jewels, before she would make peace; and how she countermined wherever the enemy were approaching, and built up

breaches in the night, and so mauled the foe in th
ditch that all parties were glad to come to term
Her murder by treason was the pathetic catastroph
and it opened Akbar's way into the Deccan, when h
had annexed Candeish by the way. The domest
treason which broke out behind his back, and th
long series of family griefs, from the deaths of tw
sons, and the crimes and quarrels of the others, wer
matters of public observation; and the Englishm
at court could have told his contemporary, Wi
Shakspeare, some tragedies as deep as any of tha
exhibited in his historical plays.

Beyond the Court, what was there to be noted
the four Hindoo castes had long been hopeless
confused, so that the accounts given by the membe
of the lower ones and the histories of the Brahmin
were quite irreconcilable. The Brahmins had pre
served their lineage; but their occupations and man
ners had greatly changed. They might be seen en
gaged in almost every occupation—not only soldier
but husbandmen—not only expounders of the fait
and the Hindoo law, but magistrates and merchant
clerks. Under Mogul government, public busine
must necessarily be in Mussulman hands, chiefly
but the Brahmins were more concerned with
than when they attended to Menu's commands, an
admitted only one of their order to power, as coun
sellor with the judges, according to the code. Th
two lower castes of Menu's time, comprehendin

the working classes, had become so multiplied that nobody outside of them could pretend to understand their distinctions, any further than as they were a sort of guilds corresponding to branches of industry, and arising out of Menu's assignment of an hereditary occupation to each of the mixed classes. But the members of each of a hundred castes were as strict in preserving their respective frontier lines as the proudest Brahmin ever was in his own case. It had become doubtful whether the lowest, the Sudra caste, was originally a separate tribe; and the intermixture of race had so confused that caste, as that a Brahmin might here and there be found in the service of a Sudra. It could scarcely be said that there was even any servile class remaining; for, though there were slaves, they were not in slavery by caste, but by other circumstances. While some of the phenomena of caste, therefore, met the Englishman's eye in all directions, he could not have given any clear account of the precise state of the institution in his time. The distinctions between the Mohammedans and Hindoos were much more obvious, though already becoming less definite every day.

The township, an institution still abiding where almost everything else has changed, was then the first object of interest to a stranger. The whole territory was portioned off into little republics, each managing its own affairs, while strictly subject to the central power. The office of Headman was

hereditary; and while that officer was called the king's officer, he was virtually the representative of the people, while changes of dynasty were passing over their heads. Under the headmen were the hereditary accountant, watchman, money-changer, priest, astrologer, and bard, or genealogist, besides all the ordinary trades. In some regions, there was an intermediate body representing the township, or constituting it, holding all the rest as tenants, and calling themselves village landholders. As for the abodes of the villagers, Leedes must have easily distinguished the true Hindoo cottage from the abodes which were assuming a Mohammedan appearance. The Hindoo dwelling of bamboo, with its curved thatched roof, and placed, if possible, apart and under trees, contrasted with the Mohammedan cottage or house of clay, or unburnt brick, or stone, with its terraced roof. The Hindoo swathed himself in two scarfs of white cotton or muslin, rubbed his skin with oil, ate rice, thought his lank hair and moustaches a sufficient covering for his head, was conscious of the grace and suppleness of his carriage, and delighted in conversation and indolent and frivolous amusement, while yet his cast of character was quiet and thoughtful. The Mohammedan, on the other hand, covered his head with a turban, and wore trousers, tunic, ornaments, and arms; tiled his roof; ate wheaten bread (unleavened); shut up the women of his family, and

not much of a talker in society. The Hindoo
ge had always a bazaar, a market day and an
al fair; one temple and one guesthouse, where
wayfarer might find shelter. Each hut and
mansion had its mat, its earthen pot and
s, its pestle and mortar, and baking plate, and
hed for cooking. The husbandman prayed
went forth at dawn with his cattle to the field;
wife brought him his hot dinner at noon, and
venings were spent in smoking and amusement.
women meantime had been grinding and cook-
washing, spinning, and fetching water. In the
s, the tradesmen and artisans lived in brick
one houses, with shops open to the streets. The
ar loungers—mendicant priests, smoking soldiers,
saucy bulls which lorded it over everybody—
nguished the towns where the Hindoos pre-
nated; and so did the festivals in which the
speople took at one draught the pleasure which
villagers spread over all their evenings. The
vances at death and burial were unlike those
e conquering race. The Hindoos burned their
, except those belonging to religious orders;
they seldom or never set up tombs, except to
iors fallen in battle, or widows burned with
husbands. When Leedes was at Delhi widows
not allowed to sacrifice themselves. In almost
y other case, Hindoo observances were carefully
ished by Akbar, and Mohammedan peculiarities

were subordinated to them; but in this case he was so resolute (the practice not being authorized by Menu) that he once mounted his horse, and rode a great distance at full speed, to save a woman from the pile. He enabled widows to marry again without any penalty which his countenance could avert; and thus Leedes witnessed a conflict with an intepolated superstition exactly like that which has been conducted by Lord William Bentinck in our day. In the wooded districts, great hunts were going on, especially where military men were stationed; and the highest officers drove their own elephants, in order not to be helpless if their drivers dropped in battle. Spear-matches and races were the amusements in the country, as wrestling and active footgames were in the towns. The thief-caste, the hereditary hill-robbers, kept in exercise the valour and alacrity of the military class. The monastic orders, another innovation, were conspicuous in Akbar's time, and must have stirred Leedes's spirit with some of the ire of Protestant England. The Hindoo women held a low rank theoretically, but practically were like other matrons and maidens in those essential ideas and feelings which are common to all races in all times. The same may be said of the handsome children. The juvenile gentry looked and behaved like little men and women; and the children of the poor (who went to school, however, and learned writing and arithmetic), rolled

in the dust, and played in the streets like any Christians.

There is no occasion to draw the contrasting picture, as Akbar's Mohammedan subjects were very like the Arabs of our own day. Their occupations, dress, manners, and amusements were substantially the same. It is true, they were adopting some Hindoo customs, as the Hindoos were occasionally wearing turbans, and surrounding their houses with gardens, after the fashion of their conquerors. But Leedes could observe these mutual influences better than we can; and where he could have pointed out resemblances, we can only mark the distinctions which must have struck the eye of a stranger arriving at the court of the great Akbar, at the close of the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING OF COMMERCE.

1593—1624.

"Sir, if any other come that hath better iron than you, he will be master of all this gold."—*Solon to Crœsus.*

We are accustomed to consider the 16th century a very lively age in regard to foreign adventure, geographical and mercantile; and yet we recognise, in the beginnings of the East India Company, a good deal of that inertness which individual adventurers in commerce, discovery, and politics have always complained of in the English people. Even after Stevens and Fitch had told the story of their respective voyages, and some notion was entertained of the splendours which Leedes witnessed at the court of Akbar, it was difficult to obtain subscriptions of capital, however small, for a trading experiment to the richest country in the world. The founders of the speculation went about diligently among their mercantile friends, representing to them the prodigious profits that the Portuguese, and of late the Dutch, were making

r buying spices and other eastern commodities
. the coast of India, instead of from middlemen
nearer ports. There was evidence that we
ere paying nearly three times as much for our
ices, indigo, and raw silk, by purchasing them
Aleppo or Alexandria, as we should if we sent
ips to Malabar. There was a certainty of
ormous profits, if the London merchants would
ıt subscribe a sufficient sum to send out an
pedition properly fitted out and guarded. At
ıe time a favourable sensation was excited by
e arrival of the cargo brought in as a prize by
r John Burroughs, the commander of one of
aleigh's armaments. This cargo of a Portuguese
ader to India, seized near the Azores, and brought
to Dartmouth, was found to consist of pearls
ıd gold, silks and ivory, porcelain, cottons, drugs
ıd perfumes, and other captivating commodities:
ıd a fillip was given for the moment to enterprise
the direction of India: but in 1599 only 30,000*l.*
ıd been subscribed in 101 shares. In the first
ear of the new century, the "Adventurers"
ıtained a charter from the Crown, giving them,
ıring a term of fifteen years, privileges which
ınstituted their trade with India a close monopoly.
s this charter was the foundation-stone of the
ighty structure of our Indian empire, it is worth
hile to glance at its leading provisions. "The
overnor and Company of Merchants of London

trading into the East Indies" were empowered to engross the entire traffic beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan, unless they chose to license private traders to repair to the same markets. The twenty-four directors and the governor (Thomas Smythe, Esq.) were appointed, in the first instance, in the charter; but the Company might at once elect a deputy governor, and in future all their office-bearers, from the highest to the lowest. The charter gave power to make bye-laws; to inflict punishments, corporal and pecuniary, provided they were in accordance with the laws of England; to export goods duty-free for four years; and to export foreign coin or bullion to the amount of 30,000*l.* a year, provided 6,000*l.* of it had been coined at the Mint, and that the amount thus exported was returned within six months of the end of every voyage, except the first. The Charter might be cancelled at any time upon two years' notice being given. Such were the terms of that first permission to trade with India, out of which grew our acquisition of the greatest dependency on record in the history of nations.

The languor of the subscribers shows how entirely public expectation was limited to a small trade, to be carried on under very uncertain conditions. The contributors did not pay up; some had never believed they should see their money again; others

thought it highly unpatriotic to send money out of the country; others again dwelt on the dangers of the voyage; and scarcely any body beyond the Board of Directors seems to have considered the project a hopeful one, in any view. It was in vain that the clever Director, Mr. Thomas Mun, represented that the husbandman is not a madman because he flings away good wheat upon the ground; and, in the same way, an exporter of gold and silver sends it abroad in expectation of a pecuniary harvest. Notwithstanding such illustrations, so many subscribers failed to pay up their share of the expenses of the first expedition, that the willing members were compelled to form an association within the Company, taking all cost and responsibility on themselves, and possessing themselves of all the returns.

It is not to our present purpose to follow the commercial fortunes of the Company in its early days. The object of dwelling even thus long on the details of its formation is to indicate that its aims were purely commercial, and understood to be so, by both the Government and people of England. As to the dimensions of the speculation, it will be enough to say that the first expedition consisted of five small ships; that the total cost of ships and cargoes was under 70,000*l.*; that the cargoes consisted of the precious metals, iron, and tin, broadcloths, cutlery, and glass; and that the result was fortunate on the whole. For a long term of years great losses nearly balanced

great profits; and the prodigious consumption of time, in days when a voyage to the Malabar coast occupied from six to twelve or fifteen months each way, practically reduced to moderation the profits which, computed in the Indian market, were boasted of as amounting to 130 or even 170 per cent. The first expedition sailed in February, 1601, and returned in September, 1603. There appears to be no evidence that it touched the coasts of the Indian peninsula at all, and its chief trade was certainly with some islands of the Eastern Archipelago.

It was five years after its return that the arrival of the English seems to have first attracted attention in India. Akbar was dead when the British ship *Hector* arrived at Surat, under the command of Captain William Hawkins, who brought two letters to the Mogul Emperor, one from James I., and one from the East India Company. The reigning Emperor, the son of Akbar, criminal in all his relations in his youth, was by this time beginning to retrieve his character, chiefly through a long attachment to the immortal Nurjehan—the Nourmahal of "Lalla Rookh," and the princess to whose memory the finest mausoleum extant, the Taj-Mahal, at Agra, was erected by her husband. It was during her term of political activity that the English were encouraged to make a lodgment, for commercial purposes, in India; and it might be for want of her discernment that Commander Hawkins and his com-

rades met with little favour in 1608, three years before her marriage with Jehanghir, and while she was the wife of another. It was nearly three years before the *Hector* got away; and then without replies to King James and the Company, and through the good offices of Sir Henry Middleton.

Sir Henry Middleton arrived at Surat in 1609, in command of a fleet which failed in its commercial objects through the opposition of the Turks on the Arabian, and the Portuguese on the Malabar coasts; but its appearance opened a way for better success two years later, when two ships, under the command of Captain Best, made such a gallant resistance when attacked by a Portuguese squadron, not far from Surat, as to impress the inhabitants very favourably. Captain Best had before been sounding the Governor of Ahmedabad, in Guzerat, about a treaty of commerce; and the negotiation was presently concluded, when the curiosity and interest of the inhabitants were fairly excited. In the same year that the Mogul Emperor married the glorious Nurjehan—the political heroine of Hindostan Proper, as Chand Bibi was the martial heroine of the Deccan—he permitted the English to establish four factories within his dominions. These factories were all on or near the Gulf of Cambay, being at Surat, Cambay, Ahmedabad, and Goga. In return for leave to make this lodgment, the English paid an export duty of 3½ per cent. on all their shipments.

In one sense, this acquisition of a footing in India was highly important to England. The Company were no longer a temporary association, drawing near the end of a fifteen years' term, and trading on capital subscribed by a few eager speculators in the name of a much larger number. King James was easy to deal with, in comparison with the prudent Queen who had granted the first charter; and he made no difficulty about abolishing such limitations as did not suit the Company's convenience. Under the renewal, which dated from 1609, there was no term fixed for the expiration of the charter. The Directors had an eternity before them, provided they escaped such impeachment as would bring a three years' notice of dissolution upon them. They now dispensed with the private subscriptions which had at once caused them trouble and rendered the separate voyages more profitable than the subsequent joint-stock enterprises. The amount of the joint-stock capital on which the new scheme proceeded was 420,000*l.* Five years later, a further capital of above a million and a half was raised, and then separately managed; and in 1632, a third, of nearly half a million—incidents which show what were the commercial results of the first establishment of our factories in 1613. The Emperor's permission was obtained, as I have said, in 1611; but the requisite firman was not signed till the 11th of January, 1613.

If the English speculators thought of nothing but

nerce in settling their Indian plans at home,
ı more certainly must they have contemplated
ing else when in Hindostan. What they saw
› dwarfed everything English in a manner now
:ely to be imagined by us. By degrees the
ensity of the territory opened upon them, as
heard of groups of sovereigns, and crowds
iieftains, each with a province or a district, or a
lom or an empire under his control, and as
found the old Hindoo organization of rulers of
towns, and a hundred towns, and a thousand
s, commemorated in traditions. The mere de-
d capitals were like the metropolitan cities of
ıpe fallen asleep. By degrees they learned
thing of the two deltas, of the Ganges and the
s, where the mere mouths of rivers might
itute fair kingdoms, without including the
se of their mighty streams. By degrees their
inations became able to attain the peaks of the
alaya, and to comprehend the spaces of the
:an which were guarded by the Ghauts. The
› they learned of Indian magnitudes, the less
l they have conceived of having any other than
nercial business there. The phenomena of human
nd manners were as stupendous in their pro-
ons as the productions of nature. Our first
ents at the native courts saw wars made on
a scale that they hardly dared to tell it at home,
ear of the contempt with which their "travellers'

tales" would be treated. In the battles between the powers of Hindostan Proper and the Deccan, 200,000 men were left dead after a single battle. A rebellious heir-apparent, the day after his defeat, was compelled to ride in front of seven hundred of his impaled supporters. As the elephant was to our cavalry horse, so were all the elements of the military system, so that an army was a marching nation, and its commissariat was the produce of an ordinary kingdom. In one expedition to the Deccan, the Mogul Emperor took 200,000 cavalry alone. The imperial wealth being in similar proportion to European ideas, the stimulus to commerce was strengthened, while every other ambition must have been overwhelmed. The Emperor sat on a throne, the jewellery of which would buy up all the crowns and coronets of kings and nobles all over the world. The shrines and mausoleums beggared the Western and Eastern Churches of Christendom, with all the Prophet's mosques to boot, from Egypt to Cabul. When other nations represent us, at this day, as having crept in upon that new region, in a humble aspect, and with low pretensions, we may well ask what else we could do. We *were* few and humble, and limited in our objects, and not a little amazed and dazzled at the spectacle of society organised on a scale wholly new to the European imagination. Happily, we are in possession of evidence that the case was so. King James sent an ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, to the

Mogul Court in 1615, and, as he was received into high favour, and accompanied the Emperor on his military expeditions, as well as his journeys of pleasure, we have the means of knowing the proportion which substantial power bore to mere display. The real refinement and cultivation of the society into which he found himself thrown, were proved by the respect and courtesy shown to the bearer of gifts which must have appeared below notice to the princes and nobles of the Delhi court. Sir Thomas Roe reported many childish weaknesses in royal personages, intermixed with proofs of ability and wisdom; and he perceived that the military genius of the people must have declined considerably since Akbar's time; but he excited the admiration of the English King and people by his account of the state of the arts in Hindostan. In regard to architecture, the Taj-Mahal is an immortal evidence of what the Mogul rule could produce; and, as to painting, the ambassador sent word that none but really good pictures would succeed; "Historical paintings, night-pieces, and landscapes," were his order; "but good; for they understand them as well as we." The language of the court was Persian; but Hawkins had found the Emperor ready to converse in Turkish; and everybody spoke Hindostanee. At one time, the Europeans at court saw Delhi so rebuilt that it might almost be said that Shah Jehán found it mud and left it marble; and on the other, they saw whole provinces

annexed to the west, and the Deccan, with its
plains, its groups of kings, and hundreds of st
castles, subjugated by mere force of numbers.
armies of the Mogul sovereigns poured over
Vindhya mountains, in a dark cloud of inva
like locust swarms on a north wind; and the
invasion left everything as bare as the other. Re
lions sprang up again, inviting new invasions,
that the final conquest of the Deccan was left
Aurungzebe to effect; but the intermediate ma
festations of power and resource by the Mogul em
were profoundly impressive to European observ
It was not a little dazzling to see the sunshine st
the peacock-throne, (the fantail imitated in ge
which was valued at six millions and a half
professional European jewellers; it was a fine sp
tacle to see the growth of the New Delhi, w
its wide streets, their canal and avenues, and
esplanade, crowned with its fortified palace, glitt
ing with burnished gold and snow-white marble;
must have been a sweet and solemn pleasure to
the Taj-Mahal at Agra grow up into its funer
completeness, adorned with all the tranquil
gracious imagery of death and regretful reme
brance; but the phenomena which most deeply
effectually impressed the English mind were th
of a social rule which could produce such monume
of art and wealth, and conduct wars for the ann
ation of kingdoms, without increasing the burd

› people, or perceptibly diminishing the treasure
which the imperial coffers seemed to be always
How was it possible that our first lodgment
;h an empire should appear otherwise than small
npretending? The imputation is, no doubt, that
was craft under the humility; but there is very
evidence that the charge is simply slanderous.
English wanted to buy and sell; and they
d nothing else whatever. Some excellent
s of advice of Sir Thomas Roe's to the Company
n to satisfy us on this point. He recommends
the abolition of his own office, and the employ-
e native agent at 100*l.* a year, to watch over
rights at Delhi; and another at the port at 50*l.*
r, to watch the trade, and communicate with
incipal. One port was better than more, he
ht; and perhaps one factory better than any
er. "It is not a number of posts, residences,
factories, that will profit you. They will
ise charge, but not recompense it." But most
atic was the exhortation to have nothing to do
military defences. "War and traffic are incom-
e," declares Sir Thomas Roe. "At my first
l, I understood a fort was very necessary; but
ience teaches me we are refused it to our
dvantage. If the Emperor would offer me ten,
ld not accept of one."
sea there must be warfare; and the general
ss of the British in their sea-fights with Euro-

pean rivals advanced their reputation on land; bu
those conflicts were only heard of; and, for a cours
of years, the native impression of an Englishma
was of an energetic personage, always buying an
selling, loading and unloading ships, emptying an
filling warehouses, paying his way and demandin
his dues, becoming irritable when the Dutch an
Portuguese and the Spice Islands were mentioned
and always victorious at sea over the Dutch an
Portuguese, and in the question of spice.

Such was the beginning of our connection wit
India. It was, as we see, purely commercial. A
change took place in 1624, which excited no parti
cular notice or marked expectation at the time
but which is now regarded as introducing a new
period in our relations with India.

CHAPTER IV.

BEGINNING OF LOCAL ESTABLISHMENT

1624—1698.

"Give me a seat, and I will make myself room to lie down."
Spanish Proverb.

The first century of British residence in India affords as good an illustration as could easily be found of the wise conclusion—"Man proposes; God disposes." Nothing could well be more unlike what men designed and anticipated than the issues of the early schemes of the East India Company. The members themselves, their supporters and their opponents, were alike surprised at finding, from period to period, that they accomplished scarcely anything they designed, and that all manner of unlooked-for things came to pass—as if the whole affair was some mighty sport, in which grave and earnest men were made the agents of some transcendent levity, or were bewildered pupils in some new school which they had entered unawares. The merchants, who began the whole business, meant to trade, and obtain large profits, and, above all else, to avoid everything but trade. With the

magnificent shows of life in India they had no con
cern whatever, beyond valuing, buying and sellin
the commodities in use before their eyes. The
knew nothing, and cared nothing, about politics—
Mogul or Mahratta; and, as for war, it was onl
too fearful even to witness it. All they desire
was to be let alone to make their fortunes, withou
any thought of law, government, negotiation, o
war, except as far as any of these might affect thei
commerce—a handful of strangers as they were
on a foreign coast. No men could be more sincer
than these men were; and yet, in the course o
the next century, a mocking destiny seemed t
make teetotums of them, their plans, and thei
fortunes.

Their commerce was never very successful. Wit
every desire to make the best of it, they coul
never present a statement of their condition whic
was not highly stimulating and amusing to privat
speculators, who followed them into the field, an
beat them at all points. They could not satisf
their own supporters, or restrain their enemies fron
competition. By some evil chance, they were alway
infested with rivals, supplanted by the Dutch, an
tricked by the Portuguese. They were the occasion
of alarming collisions between the two Houses o
Parliament; and if they won what they desire
from one sovereign, the next came down upon them
for money, while their balance-sheet satisfied thei

enemies better than their friends. They exchanged commodities, no doubt, and made profits; but their concerns were puny in comparison with their pretensions, and did not expand at all in proportion to their scope. It will be enough to say that their reports for the three years preceeding 1683 show that they sent out in those years respectively ten ships, eleven, and seventeen; and that the total cargoes were worth 461,700*l.*, 596,000*l.*, and 740,000*l.* While their direct object succeeded no better than this, they found themselves passing laws, ruling settlements, and making war and negotiating treaties, in alliance or opposition, with the princes of the country. They found themselves touching many points of Indian territory and Indian polity, and fastening wherever they touched, till the necessity was ripe which made them a great administrative and military power. It would take a volume to exhibit their history during the seventeenth century. But it may be possible to fill up by a rapid sketch the interval between the opening of the first warehouse at Surat and their establishment as a substantive power in India, when the last great Mogul Emperor had gone down to his grave. On the rivalships of competing companies in England, and the difficulties with individual adventurers in the East, I cannot even touch. In the history of the East India Company, no part is perhaps more interesting; but my object is to follow the progress

of the British occupation of India; and I must—whenever it is possible—confine myself to the Asiatic scene of action, during the century which decided our fortunes there.

Sir Thomas Roe, we have seen, strongly condemned the setting up of forts to protect the warehouses. There must be some fighting at sea with European rivals, but none in India, where the inhabitants gave us no difficulty. But there was a third party to be guarded against—the Company's own servants. Besides the sprinkling of thieves and scamps, always attracted to remote scenes of speculation, there was an ambitious, or headstrong, or tyrannical man turning up now and then to make mischief, offending neighbours, or defying his masters. The masters applied to the King in 1624 for authority to punish their servants in India by civil and martial law; and the authority was given, without hesitation, even to the ultimate point, of inflicting capital punishment. The King did not consult Parliament, nor express any doubt of the necessity of the case; and there is no evidence that the petitioners had any notion of what was comprehended in their request. No preparation had been made for establishing law and justice in the new settlements; and now the commercial adventurers found themselves able to punish at discretion, without any principles or rules of law to go by. Their function as legislators and executive rulers was thus

already indicated for them; and on this account the year 1624 is regarded as constituting an era in their history. The wisest men among them, during the reigns of the Stuarts, seem to have entertained a truly royal contempt for constitutional law, and a great relish for freedom of will and hand in executive matters. In the early history of the Company there are no greater names than those of the brothers Sir Josiah and Sir John Child. These gentlemen were full of sense, information, vigour, and commercial prudence; yet Sir Josiah has left us an account of his notions which reads strangely in our day. A Mr. Vaux, who in 1686 entered upon the office of manager, with professions of a desire to act justly and uprightly, and with a constant regard to the laws of his country, was thus rebuked by his patron. Sir Josiah Child "told Mr. Vaux roundly that he expected *his* orders were to be his rules, and not the laws of England, which were a heap of nonsense, compiled by a few ignorant country gentlemen, who hardly knew how to make laws for the good government of their own private families, much less for the regulating of companies and foreign commerce." Such was the view of an old man who had seen the whole procession of the statesmen of the Commonwealth pass before his eyes.

Meantime, the wars of the princes of India had much of the same effect on society as the wars of

the Roses in England. The commercial classes grew and throve while the nobles fought over their heads, so that when, in the English case, a mere group was left to assemble in the Peers' House, a town was found to have grown up at the mouth of every river, and shipping to have found its way into many a new harbour. Thus it was in India during the final process of the subjugation of the Deccan by the Mogul sovereigns. Not only the indefatigable Dutch, and the Portuguese, who were first in the field, but the English, and presently the French, began to alight and make themselves at home on distant coasts of the peninsula. Piece goods, then in great demand—the delicate muslins and soft cottons of the Deccan—were to be had more easily on the Coromandel coast than on the western, and the Company attempted to set up several factories or depôts there. We read of four, besides the Madras establishment; but European rivals were hardy, and native governments were harsh, and one after another was given up, or transferred to some safer place—to be again removed. Under these difficulties, men began to talk again of forts. It might be true that garrisons would absorb all the profits of trade; but it was clear that trade could not go on without garrisons. No help was to be had from home. During the civil war there, nobody had any attention to spare for India; and the Company's agents must take care of themselves: so, in 1640, they obtained leave from the

native government to build the fort at Madras—Fort St. George; and the new institution was fairly established which annulled the purely pacific character of British settlements in India. The forts were a humble enough affair; and the native soldiers who were hired to hold them were armed with anything which came to hand, from bows and arrows to damaged muskets; but the Company had now a military front to show, and was pretty sure to be soon called on for evidences of its military quality.

It was the King himself, Charles I., who had brought the Company round to the conviction that they must have forts. In 1635 he had granted a license to a rival company, alleging, among other reasons for the act, that the existing company had fallen short of their duty in neglecting to establish fortified factories, or seats of trade, to which the King's subjects could resort with safety. The charter was supposed to be forfeited by the King's death, as it was a royal and not a parliamentary boon: but the Company exerted themselves to found a claim to better support whenever the kingdom should be once more brought under a settled government. They turned, therefore, to the rich basin of the Ganges, to see if they could not effect a lodgment there, where produce of the most varied kind abounded. We hear of them as having some sort of settlement at Hooghly in 1640; but it brought them more

trouble than profit for some years, in consequence of a mistake of their own in seizing a junk on the Ganges, which involved them in a dispute—not only with the Nabob of Bengal, but with the Mogul government. They had not capital where-with to extend their operations; and their affairs languished in Bengal; but it was a substantial fact that they had fastened their lines at remote points of the territory—in the Gulfs of Cambay and Bengal, and on the Coromandel coast; and the outer threads of the great net were laid. By an accident which presently brought into play the abilities of one of their servants their commercial fortunes were advanced, and "a stake in the country" was fairly appointed to them.

The medical officers of the English ships were eagerly consulted by the rich Mohammedans of Surat, and other places in the neighbourhood of our factories, and the reputation of their skill had reached the Mogul sovereigns. When Shah Jehán, the father of Aurungzebe, was waging war in the Deccan, one of his daughters was severely burnt. An express was despatched to Surat for an English surgeon. Mr. Gabriel Boughton was sent from the factory; and his success in restoring the princess gave him great influence with her father. He used his power in obtaining freedom of commerce for his countrymen. When he was in the service of the Governor of

Bengal soon after, privileges of high importance were obtained and practically enjoyed; but it required nearly thirty years, and a large expenditure in bribes, to get the license perpetuated and consolidated in a firman. This was done in Aurungzebe's time, in 1680. The terms were that the Company should pay 3,000 rupees (350*l.*) in return for perfect freedom of trade throughout the rich territory of Bengal. Cromwell was strongly disposed to extend this freedom to the whole of Indian commerce by abolishing the monopoly of the Company; and he thereby excited as much alarm in Holland as among the Directors in London; but he was prevailed with to renew the charter in 1657. As Parliament did not ratify that charter then, nor on its renewal by Charles II., in 1661, there were no means of preventing as much private adventure as individual speculators might choose to hazard, and the trade began to show in India what might be done under the natural laws of commerce, however damaging the results of competition were to the Company at home. If their income was suffering from this cause, and from our hostilities with the Dutch, their power and dignity were eminently advanced by the new charter, which permitted them to make peace or war with any power or people "not of the Christian religion;" to establish fortifications, garrisons, and colonies, to export ammunition and

stores to their settlements duty-free; to arrest and send home any traders they found encroaching on their commerce; and to exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction in India, according to the laws of England.

These provisions for defence were necessitated by the wars of Indian potentates, in the midst of which unguarded factories could have had no security whatever: but it is a remarkable fact that the "Adventurers" who were so determined at first, and for as long as possible, to have none but commercial relations with India should find themselves at the end of sixty years in possession of forts and a soldiery, of courts of justice, and a power of life and death; and likely to enter into political alliances, as a substantive power. So early as 1653, Fort St. George was erected into a Presidency, because it was unsafe for the English residents to be dependent on a seat of government so remote as Bantam while the native potentates on the Coromandel coast were perpetually at war, and the European settlers pretty much at their mercy. When secure of their new powers, the Company made Surat and Fort St. George their centres of government, subordinating a few other settlements to them, and breaking up some, in outlying places, which were too insecure or expensive to be worth retaining.

The use which they made of their power to send home interlopers presently caused a collision between

the two Houses of Parliament, which, however serious, should find its place in a constitutional history of England, rather than in a sketch of our relations with India. "The Skinner case" perplexed all England, and caused the King to adjourn Parliament seven times before he could restore any appearance of peace; but the mischief lay rather in the King and the Lords acting without the constitutional participation of the Commons than in any discovery that the powers of the Company in India were too extensive. One natural consequence, however, was that the Company were more fully recognised at home as a power than they had ever been before.

Their first military reputation grew out of an accident, happening (as was henceforth to be the rule) through the hostility of native potentates. Aurungzebe, the last great Mogul ruler, was governing in the place of his deposed father in 1664, when the first great Mahratta Chief, Sivajee, marched against him, choosing Surat for his point of attack. The Governor of Surat shut himself up in the castle, the inhabitants fled; but the English stood their ground. They refused to capitulate, defended their factory, with the aid of some ships' crews, and cleared the neighbourhood of the enemy, affording substantial protection to the residents. The residents thanked and blessed them, and Aurungzebe remitted on their behalf a part of the Customs' duties at Surat, and all transit charges whatever. At that time,

when Aurungzebe was at the height of his renown and finally subjugating the Deccan, martial qualities were highly valued; and there is no doubt of the effect on the people of India of the gallant conduct of the British at Surat. They could make no such parade as the Mogul Emperor, with his 200,000 horse, his countless host of infantry, his long lines of elephants, and his glitter of arms, from the one horizon to the other; but the simple readiness and dauntless bearing of the little company of English, within their small enclosure, made an ineffaceable impression on a people who may be able to admire contrasts as much as other races of men. It might have been well if, during recent years, a little more attention had been paid to this first military success in India by those who insist that the natives of India can be impressed only by outward show, imitated from barbaric times and rulers. From point to point of our Indian history there are evidences that the inhabitants of our Asiatic territories are just as human in their admiration of great personal qualities, apart from external grandeur, as the men of Europe and America.

The reign of Charles II. was remarkable in the history of British India for several reasons. The extension of powers by the Charter of 1661 was one. The introduction of tea is another. Early in 1668, the Company's agent at Bantam was desired to send home 100lbs. of tea, "the best he could get:" and

thus began the Company's trade in a commodity to which it owes its existence at this day. It would be an interesting speculation—what our relations with India would now be if tea had not been introduced into Europe, and so relished as to afford an adequate support to the East India Company till its commercial phase was past.

Lastly, it was through Charles II. that the Company acquired Bombay. The island of Bombay was a part of the marriage portion of Catherine of Portugal, the Queen of Charles II. It was more expensive than profitable to the Crown, and it suited the convenience of all parties that it should be transferred to the Company. The conditions of the transfer were remarkable. After a provision that Bombay should not pass out of British possession, it was permitted to the Company to legislate for the settlement, and to wage war on behalf of it. Their laws were to be "consonant to reason," and "as near as might be" to English methods: but legislative and military powers were fully and freely conferred. One of the first consequences was that the western Presidency was removed from Surat to Bombay. It was in 1668 that the Company acquired Bombay; and from that time till 1698 there were two Presidencies, with the Bengal settlement in a state of dependency on them. Till 1692 the Bengal establishment was at Hooghly, thirty miles above Calcutta. In that year it was removed to Calcutta,

and in six years more Calcutta itself with two adjoining villages, was granted to the Company by a grandson of Aurungzebe, who permitted the erection of fortifications and full judiciary powers over the inhabitants. The new fortifications were naturally named after the reigning king, William III., and the agency at Fort William was soon converted into a third Presidency.

Thus were the British in India transformed, in the course of one century, from a handful of "adventurers," landing a cargo of goods, in a tentative way, at the mouth of the Taptee, and glad to sell their commodities and buy others on the residents' own terms, to a body of colonists, much considered for their extensive transactions, and the powers, legislative, executive, and military, which they wielded. Whence these powers were derived, who these English were, and why they came, might be more than Aurungzebe himself could distinctly explain; and to this day, the relation of our Indian empire to the British seems to be a puzzle to the inhabitants, being really anomalous in English eyes as well. But there we were, acting from three centres of authority and power, and exercising whatever influence commerce put into our hands. It was not for want of enterprise that the British had as yet no territorial power. Sir Josiah Child believed the possession of more or less territory to be necessary to the security of our commerce; and in 1686 an attempt was made

to obtain a footing in Bengal by force of arms. It not only failed, but would have resulted in the expulsion of every Englishman from the Mogul's dominions, but for the importance of our commerce to Aurungzebe's treasury. Our reputation suffered by this unsuccessful prank of ambition and cupidity; but not the less did the last of the great Moguls go to his grave, knowing that he left the English established in his dominions beyond the possibility of dislodgment. They were neither subjects nor rulers in India; but such a man as Aurungzebe must have been well aware that if they were really irremoveable they must sooner or later become the one or the other.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN THE INFANT PRESIDENCIES.

1698—1740.

"In everything we do, we may be possibly laying a train of consequences, the operation of which may terminate only with our existence."—BAILEY.

UP to the time of Aurungzebe's death, our relations with India were very simple, and might be easily and rapidly described. The Mogul Court was the one object which we had to observe, and in regard to which we had to act. To be on good terms with the Mogul Emperors was to be prosperous and safe: to incur their displeasure was to be in danger and difficulty. The Company had troubles outside the pale of their Indian relations; opponents at home, foreign rivals on the seas, and interlopers on their own commercial grounds; but, as far as the powers of India were concerned, the Mogul sovereigns were supreme, and our affairs were simple accordingly. We had to maintain and improve our commercial privileges, to secure a permanent footing in the country; and, for the rest, to buy and sell to the best advantage.

But a time of change must come, sooner or later; and the nature of the change which must ensue on the death of such a sovereign as Aurungzebe, after a reign of forty-nine years, might be foretold, without any pretensions to second sight. When a ruler, wise, efficient, strong in will, and imposing in his successes, dies after a long reign, leaving several sons, a weak government, civil strife, and foreign war as a consequence, may be only too confidently anticipated. In the case of Aurungzebe and his sons, the chances of the future were even worse than usual. The last of the great Moguls commanded everything but affection. He irritated his dependants and subjects while compelling them to admire his abilities and his wisdom. He alienated the Hindoos (the great mass of his subjects) by constant checks and discouragements, while protecting them from Mussulman persecution. He was regarded by the Faithful as a greater monarch than even Akbar; yet they gave him no such effectual support as enabled him to accomplish his schemes. He conquered the Deccan; yet, in his old age, he had more and more to dread from the Mahrattas; and, as he himself disclosed, he was borne down by anxiety as to what he might have to endure in life, and dread of what he might have to encounter after death. It must have been plain to all eyes that bad times were coming; and the

British would have foreseen, if their wisdom had corresponded to their needs, that complications and embarrassments must arise, largely affecting, if not entirely changing, their relations with the Mogul empire. In one instance by accident, and in another by a movement of foolish ambition, the British were on bad terms with Aurungzebe, some years before his death. In 1698, a pilgrim ship on its way to Mecca was taken by pirates, who were, or were said to be, English. The Emperor ordered the arrest of the merchants at our factories, and the seizure of Bombay; but his own agents were favourable to their British neighbours, and admitted their plea of innocence; and if anything was done, it was only in the way of inflicting a fine. We have already referred to the other case—that of the hostile movement in Bengal, in 1686, when the Company, strengthened by a few troops from home, hoped to obtain redress for losses and a territorial footing by seizing and fortifying Chittagong. The scheme failed, through misadventure and mismanagement; and the incident was one which naturally deepened the Emperor's distrust, and confirmed the jealous antipathy of the Nabob of Bengal to the English. The aged Emperor's life was prolonged beyond the period of rivalship in England and strife in Parliament which seemed likely to extinguish the Company's privileges altogether, and under which

the trade of India was practically free from 1693 to 1698: and Aurungzebe was still living when the associations which had battled for the commerce of his empire at length joined their forces as "The United Company of Merchants of England, trading to the East Indies." While their old patron was failing in strength and spirits as he verged towards his 90th year, the British merchants obtained the grant of Calcutta, as before mentioned, built Fort William, raised Bengal from its subjection to Bombay up to the rank of a Presidency, and obtained from Parliament, in the form of an absolute prohibition of Indian manufactured goods for home consumption, a reversal of the free trade which had existed for several years, to the advantage of the public, and the discontent of the Company.

Then, after five years more, spent in establishing factories wherever they could be imposed, and in finding that many of them were more expensive than they were worth, the catastrophe arrived. Aurungzebe died in 1707; and with him the empire of the Moguls may be said to have passed away. Crimes of violence and treachery had been frequent before; now they occurred at the Court of Delhi and its dependencies in an unintermitting series, and external foes used their opportunities; so that when Aurungzebe had been dead thirty years, the empire was just in the state of helplessness and corruption which had tempted Timur and Baber to invade it. The

same thing happened again. The greatest of Persian warriors, Nadir Shah, crossed the Indus towards the close of 1738, and was giving out his decrees from the palace at Delhi in March 1739.

Our concern with Indian history, in this place, is only in as far as it is connected with the conduct and the fortunes of the British on the spot. It is no easy matter to give even that much without tedious and irksome detail; yet the interval between the death of Aurungzebe and the administration of Clive must not be passed over, if the subsequent history is to be understood, and in any degree relished. Perhaps the best way of conveying something like a clear impression of our Indian relations, from a century and a half to a century ago, is to offer a sketch of what life in India was like, after the founding of the three Presidencies. In the course of such a survey we may discover which of the crowd of native States involved British fortunes more or less with their own; and the rest of the multitude of potentates, with all their marches, battles, "treasons, stratagems, and spoils," may be left undistinguished—on the understanding, however, that they must not be altogether forgotten, as if they did not exist, because it was a leading feature of the life of the British in India that they were always surrounded by rulers and peoples who were at feud, and who desisted from mutual slaughter only to enter upon conflicts of deceit and treachery. The alternative was between savage

warfare in the field and diabolical bad faith in diplomacy; and the constant presence of such phases of social life must produce more or less effect on the condition, moral and material, of all spectators.

First, we must glance at the British residents themselves, in their chief settlements. Of these the most important was Fort St. George, standing only a few yards from the sea, on a sounding shore, where the surf is too furious to be crossed except by boats of a peculiar construction. A worse place for foreign commerce could hardly have been fixed on: five miles of coast, with a strong current running along the shore, and a roadstead so exposed that, as often as not, the native rafts are the only means of communication with the shipping outside. It must have been a welcome amusement to the gentlemen, doomed to so monotonous a life, to see the agile natives put forth and return with their catamarans, casting their lives into the surf as into a lottery, to find a blank or a rich recompense for the daring. A large town of mean dwellings had sprung up near the fort; and outside the town some pleasant-looking country houses stood, each in its own garden. There lived the writers and the factors, and the merchants, seniors and juniors. Their work was to deal with the native weavers and indigo growers; to make advances to the poorest, and pay the balances, and see the cargoes packed, and conduct the correspondence home, and preserve the Company's monopoly, and pay some

little attention to the soldiers in the fort, and order in the factory. The Writers were the clerks and book-keepers; and their pay was so small that the wonder is why they went so far, and to live in such a climate, for so little. The Factors ordered, received, and despatched the commodities. The Merchants conducted the commerce—the seniors having been writers for five years, factors for three, and junior merchants for three, and being now qualified to be Members of Council, with the chance of being President. What their pleasures were we learn from tradition and their correspondence. They rode in the cool hours; they played cards, and they looked out over the sea, like other clerks and merchants in countries remote from home. There was little to be told about any pursuits of a literary or other thoughtful character.

The life at Bombay was much the same, but with more variety, and perhaps more local vexations. The harbour was good: but nothing else in that small island was good. Whatever was not parched rock was swamp or pool. The tides are high; and there was then nothing to save the lower parts of the island from invasion by the sea. At times, the inhabitants of separate houses were isolated for days or weeks together. The place was unhealthy, of course. The island of Salsette, now united with Bombay by causeways, was then in the possession of the Mahrattas, who were anything but quiet and decent neighbours; and yet it was important to be

on terms with them, as the salt soil of Bombay island would grow literally nothing but cocoa-nut trees; and there were emergencies when it was a matter of necessity to get food from Salsette. On the other hand, life was less stagnant at Bombay than in any other part of India. There was more material for mere amusement in the hunts on the Malabar shore, and in the remains of antiquity, like the rock temples on the island of Elephanta: but there were more stirring influences still in the liabilities of the position—in the piratical attacks from without and the mutinies within. It was necessary to keep constant watch and guard against the pirates of the Arabian Sea; and this was the more difficult from the frequency of mutiny within the gates. Six years after the cession of Bombay to the Company a revolt exercised the new powers of the merchants in decreeing and inflicting capital punishment; and a far more formidable one, eight years after, in behalf of the King as proprietor of Bombay, so endangered the Company's tenure that the King had to interfere in their favour, and the western presidency was transferred to Bombay from Surat. Yet we meet with occasional notices of the manners of the time and place which show that the residents were not engrossed by their cares. A Mogul diplomatist and historian, who was sent to Bombay on a mission by Aurungzebe in a time of misunderstanding, reported of the merchants as knowing how to receive envoys properly, and making the

most of the military material they had to display The elderly gentlemen were richly dressed, and sufficiently acute and wise, though they laughed rather more than such personages should on such an occasion.

When the English in Bengal preferred settling lower down on the Ganges than Hooghly, their reason was that the site of Calcutta was more convenient for shipping, and therefore more secure. The aspect of their plot of land was discouraging enough It was chiefly jungle and marsh, with three villages of thatched huts. There was scarcely a dwelling outside these poor villages. The Dutch and the French passed up and down between their shipping and their factories, which were higher up the river than Hooghly. Sometimes they were enemies, and sometimes only rivals; and they were the only companionable persons our factors ever saw, except on the arrival of their own vessels. The natives were vexatious people to deal with—indolent, slow, spiritless, but producing goods which were indispensable to commerce. The merchants were incessantly engaged in driving them to fulfil their engagements and in vigilance against the lies and trickery which abounded among a timid race, always suffering under the oppression of native rulers. Occasional hunts river trips, and hospitality to visitors, were the only recreation of the Calcutta merchants when once their houses were built along the river banks. The station

was unhealthy; and their dwellings were too like English houses for the climate, and much less favourable to health and comfort than they might have been. It must be hoped that the managers and merchants here laughed as much as those at Bombay; but it must have been difficult at times to find the occasion.

Here is the little we can gather about the English agents, as they lived at the three presidencies. Something more is known of the orders of persons about them, who made up the business, the interest, and the anxiety of their lives, apart from their immediate commercial occupations.

The chief plague of life at all the settlements was that hydra-headed body—the "interlopers," or private traders. The hatred of interlopers seems to have been to the British factor in India something like the Indian-hating of the pioneer in the wilds of America. To track intruders who were trafficking under foreign passports was as good an excitement as tiger-hunting: and there was no lack of employment while that sort of enemy infested the country. Evidence was collected; complaints were sent home; captures were made, and offenders shipped off as prisoners. A series of Acts of Parliament was obtained to check this encroachment, culminating in one which declared all British subjects found in India outside of the Company's service guilty of a high misdemeanour, and liable to seizure

accordingly, for trial at home; but neither laws, perils, forfeiture, nor personal penalties availed to preserve the Company's monopoly as long as foreign potentates favoured Indian enterprises, and offered passports to capitalists of all nations to prosecute them. No game laws have ever secured the preserves of the landed gentry; and a whole series of Acts failed to deter the interlopers. The factors had to hunt them the more the longer the conflict for the monopoly went on. The great ladies of Europe wore more and more Indian silks; and yet the commerce of the Company did not increase. The proprietors at home were dissatisfied with the returns: the managers on the spot declared their ill-success to be owing to the amount of illegal traffic; and though this was only partially true, their anxieties caused the interlopers to be the plague of their lives.

The sepoys began to occupy some time and attention. As soon as there were forts, there must be soldiers. A few recruits came out from home—a very bad set, for the most part. Deserters from the other European settlements in India offered themselves: but they were worse still—inasmuch as, in their case, the probability of treachery was added to the vices which had sent them adrift. At Bombay, but not on the eastern side, there were half-castes or converts, Indo-Portuguese by blood or by proselytism. In all the stations there was a better resource,

though thus far a very scanty one, in the sepoys, or native soldiers. When first engaged, the sepoys were partly armed with bows and arrows, and partly with the sword and buckler of the country. They wore the usual turban, vest, and drawers, and were commanded by native officers. They were soon trained to the use of the musket; but no one thought of applying European discipline till they had proved their steadiness, and capacity of rendering good service in the forts. That no account was kept of their numbers at the respective settlements shows how little idea there was of the importance of this native soldiery to our future conquest and maintenance of our Indian empire. It appears that the French were beforehand with us in training the sepoys they found, as well as the negroes they imported. The sufferings of our factors from the French arms in 1746 proved how great the neglect of the British had been; and from 1748 onwards, the British sepoys were expressly reported of, as to their numbers and quality. Meantime, as the head of each presidency was Commander-in-chief of the troops of his settlement, he was more or less occupied with his few sepoys, on whom the safety of the forts mainly depended. They were supremely valuable as acclimatized soldiers; but, till long experience had proved their fidelity, they could not but be a great anxiety, as often as hostile movements of neighbours made them most indispensable.

Those hostile neighbours were of various races and qualities; but the two chief are all that can be noticed here.

The French had established a settlement at Pondicherry in the latter part of the seventeenth century; and the same sort of jealousy which our factors entertained of the Dutch and Portuguese was aggravated in the case of the French by the hereditary national hatred, which the state of Europe particularly strengthened at that time. The two nations gnashed their teeth and shook their fists at each other from Madras and Pondicherry (less than 90 miles apart) as they did from Dover and Calais. We shall see presently how their state of mutual vigilance issued in the middle of the last century.

The other formidable neighbour was the Mahrattas. Considering the space they occupy in the history of British India, it seems strange that they should have been as yet scarcely alluded to. The reason is that they rose into notice only in the time of Aurungzebe. Five centuries before, their name had occurred in Eastern chronicles as that of a conquered hill-people, supposed to live along the course of the Nerbudda, and up towards Guzerat—Candeish being a part of their territory. Sivajee founded the great modern Mahratta empire, but, dying a quarter of a century before Aurungzebe, his successors were kept down by the great Mogul. Nothing could check them, however, as a nation

of predatory warriors: and they so managed their warfare as to win over a multitude of landowners by fear or favour. The nominal sovereigns of the Mahrattas were prisoners from generation to generation; but their hereditary prime ministers (the Peishwas) answered the purpose of viceroys. The method of rule was to confer large grants of land on chiefs, who were virtual sovereigns, while superstitiously acknowledging in words the supremacy of their rajah. At the beginning of the last century, the Mahrattas seem to have been here, there, and everywhere. Sivajee's father had a tract of land in the Carnatic, and the command of 10,000 cavalry; so that the managers at Fort George might well live in dread of the Mahrattas. Mahratta chiefs were at Poonah and in Salsette, in Berar and in Guzerat; so that Bombay had to keep a yet more vigilant watch. They professed to approach the north-east no nearer than Berar: but not the less were they feared in Bengal. The Nabob of Bengal paid blackmail to them, or the rice crops of whole provinces were swept off: and the British fortified Calcutta, for the protection of their magazines of goods, and of food and ammunition.

Such was life in our Indian Presidencies for forty years after the death of Aurungzebe.

CHAPTER VI.

BEGINNING OF A MILITARY FUNCTION.

1740—1752.

"So then, when the pedlar found he was welcome in the castle, he made himself at home. He set down his box, and put off his cloak: and behold! he was in armour, and wore a sword. Then one said he had seen the glitter of the breastplate while yet the stranger was on the threshold; and another had heard the tap of the sword against the floor: and the family mistrusted the change but the stranger said that his armour and weapons were as necessary to his calling as his box and its lock and key."—*Fairy Tale.*

"He lived unknown
To fame or fortune; haply eyed at distance
Some edileship, ambitious of the power
To judge of weights and measures; scarcely dared
On expectations strongest wing to soar
High as the consulate, that empty shade
Of long-forgotten liberty: when I
Oped his young eye to bear the blaze of greatness;
Showed him where empire towered, and bade him strike
The noble quarry."—Gray.

The period last described was that of transition from the first phase of British life in India to another which had not been dreamed of by the earliest adventurers. The commercial character of our Eastern enterprise was now to merge in the military and territorial.

The first recognition of us as holders of territory

was from the date of the patents granted to us by a descendant of Aurungzebe's, in 1717. There were thirty-four of these patents, which, collectively, secured great privileges to our trade in the way of exemption from duties and aggressions, while they gave us certain villages near Madras which had been the subject of dispute, and permitted the Company to rent the island of Diu, near Masulipatam, and to purchase the lordship of thirty-seven towns near Calcutta. We had before held, at Madras, a strip of coast, five miles long and one mile wide; at Bombay, a small island, all rock and salt marsh; and in Bengal, little more than the plot of ground on which Calcutta stood. By this great charter of 1717, as the English considered it, we became possessed of both banks of the river, for an extent of ten miles below Calcutta. The expectations of the merchants at home were unbounded, now that such a footing was obtained in the rich province of Bengal — all risks and burdens being at the same time removed, as far as the authority of the Court of Delhi extended. The patents had been rather expensive, it is true, and so was the embassy which obtained them by bribes from the debased Mogul sovereign, Furucksur; and some of the stipulations were evaded by the local rulers; but it was not doubted that the profits under the new system would soon pay for all. This did not turn out true, however. The

commerce of the Company did not increase, even though the taste for tea became wonderfully developed in Europe. At any time within the following thirty years the commerce of the Company might be shown to have been nearly equalled by that of single firms in London.

Yet were the English regarded in India, not exactly as "a nation of shopkeepers," for the natives had been told that Europe did not contain more than ten thousand men altogether—but as a sort of pedlar caste. The French had establishments, imitated from ours, as ours were from the Dutch — presidencies ruled by a governor, with the help of a council, composed of senior merchants, while the lower offices were filled by junior merchants, factors and writers; and yet the French were regarded as a military people, and admired accordingly, long before we were supposed to be anything but shopkeepers. The reason assigned for this contrasted estimate is that the French were the first to discover the two great secrets of European strength in India: that European strength depended essentially on military *prestige*; and that the native soldier was susceptible of training in European discipline. While the few native soldiers, first retained at Bombay, and then at Madras, were still the disorderly ill-armed peons that they were when taken into pay, the French authorities were training and arming

their native bands (as well as the blacks from Africa), and were not long in convincing their Mahratta neighbours that, however it might be with the English, there were other Europeans who were equal to war, and had a liking for it. The time was at hand for a change in Mogul and Mahratta public opinion in regard to the British.

The French had two presidencies in the East—one at the Isle of France and the other at Pondicherry. Their three factories in India were subject to the Pondicherry government—one on the Malabar and another on the Coromandel coast; and a third, Chandernagore, on the Hooghly, 23 miles above Calcutta.

In 1732 commerce seemed to be under an evil star in that Bengal region. The English government reduced their dividends that year, notwithstanding the splendid terms they had obtained from Delhi: and as for the French factory at Chandernagore, it was in a truly beggarly state. Commerce seemed to be extinct; there was not a vessel of any class at its wharf; and poverty and license divided the lives of the wretched inhabitants of the wooden huts which constituted the settlement. An able man arrived as manager; and stone dwellings rose up in the place of wooden huts, to the number of two thousand: and, instead of a dead stillness at the waterside, from twelve to fifteen vessels a day were coming and going. The hour and the man had arrived for the

French; and the hour and the man were approaching for the English. While the great Dupleix was beginning his reforms there in the prime vigour of his years, a child in England was giving almost as much annoyance to his relations as he was hereafter to cause to Dupleix. The Spaniards say that "the thorn comes into the world point foremost." It was so in this case. The uncle of little Robert Clive, then in his seventh year, wrote a sad character of him. "Fighting, to which he is out of measure addicted," said the uncle, "gives his temper such a fierceness and imperiousness, that he flies out on every trifling occasion." At the same date, there was born in a poor parsonage in Worcestershire a forlorn infant, the son of a father married at sixteen, and soon after dead, and of a mother who died in a few days after the orphan's birth, leaving him to the care of a grandfather, sunk in trouble and poverty. No one living could then have divined what connection could exist among the destinies of these three. Nor would it have been easier to guess seven years later. At that later date, Dupleix had purchased no less than seventy vessels, to carry his commodities to all parts of the known world, extinguishing in Bengal the English reputation for commercial ability, and bringing splendid returns to his own coffers. Robert Clive was then full of mischief—sitting on a spout at the top of the lofty steeple of Market Drayton church, and levying a blackmail of apples

and halfpence, with his rabble rout of naughty boys at his heels, on the tradesmen who feared for their windows. As for little Warren, the orphan, then seven years old, he was lying beside the brook which flows through the lands of his ancestry, and, as he himself told afterwards, making up his mind to the personal ambition of his life—to be, like his forefathers of several generations, Hastings of Daylesford. On these three—the ambitious and unscrupulous French manager, already at his work, the turbulent English schoolboy, and the romantic child, dreaming under the great ancestral oaks, while living and learning among ploughboys—the destinies of British India were to hang. Through them we were to hold India as a territory, and by a military tenure; and to have a policy there, perhaps as important to the human race in the long run as that of the mother-country—however much may be comprehended in that abstraction.

In 1739, Nadir Shah took Delhi, after a victorious march from Persia. Alternate massacres defiled the city, and left it half empty, as plunder left it bare of its pomp and grandeur. The Mogul sovereigns had declined in authority from the death of Aurungzebe; and now they were the mere victims of their viceroys. The empire was broken up into a greater number of states than it is here necessary to particularise; and, in the mutual rivalship which sprang up in all directions, now that there was no central power to repress

such feuds, it was natural that the chiefs should try, while estimating their resources, what they could make of the English and French. The foreigners, on their part, found this a good opportunity for carrying out in the East the hostilities which were beginning once more in Europe between their respective nations. Thus the native Soubahdars or Nabobs courted the Europeans for the sake of their superiority in civilization and military discipline; and the Europeans, in return, took up the quarrels of the native states, in the prosecution of the war between England and France; and as a struggle for supremacy in India. When Nadir Shah sacked Delhi, England and France were contending against each other in a war which was called Spanish; but by 1744 they were in undisguised war with each other. It was in the interval that the governors of the French presidencies in India, foreseeing the coming war, made all ready for humbling the English, while both implicated themselves in alliance with their native neighbours, for purposes of attack and defence. Dupleix had been summoned from Bengal to rule at Pondicherry just at the time when Clive went out to Madras, as a writer, at the age of 17—poor, arrogant, dissatisfied, and in that mood which is common to young persons of strong self-will, who believe that nobody likes them, and suspect that nobody cares for them. He grew more sullen and wretched every day, and twice attempted his life—learning a proud

fatalism from the accidental failure of his purpose on both occasions; and meantime, Dupleix was giving out that he had received investiture and diplomas from Delhi, in virtue of which he was a Soubahdar, and the brother in rank of the Nabobs who commanded the states of the Deccan. In that capacity he promised his neighbours the possession of Madras, and the complete subjection of the English; and he would no doubt have performed his engagements if Clive had not appeared in time to baffle him.

The governor of the other French presidency, Labourdonnais, had been preparing, in the Isle of France, for the outbreak of war between France and England. There was no reason to suppose that the English could withstand at sea the united forces of France and Spain; and Labourdonnais did, in fact, land his troops, in spite of the English ships of war, and appear before Madras with his force of 1,700 or 1,800 men, of whom 400 were trained sepoys, and 400 Africans, disciplined in the same way. The fort of St. George was a mere enclosure within a thin wall, with four bastions and four batteries for defence, and containing about fifty houses, with the warehouses and two churches. The other divisions of the town were almost undefended. There were only 300 Europeans, of whom two-thirds were the garrison, and the remaining 100 as yet by no means warlike. The place was bombarded for five days; and during

that time the besieged made offers of ransom; but Labourdonnais wanted to show all India the spectacle of French colours flying from the richest of the English settlements; and he proposed to be satisfied with a moderate ransom, and to restore the settlement to the English, if they would yield up the place for a time. He was received into the town without the loss of a man. Only four or five were killed on the English side, and two or three houses destroyed. The keys were delivered to him; his commissaries were set over the magazines and warehouses, but the British were left at large on parole. Here Dupleix interfered. As governor in the Indian presidency, he claimed the disposal of Madras and of everything in it. He declared that it should be razed to the ground. Labourdonnais could show that his orders from home expressly justified the terms he had made; but Dupleix succeeded in obtaining delay till his rival should have gone home to his government. He caused the evacuation of Madras, and carried the English to Pondicherry, and through the place, as captives—the governor himself being made to head the ignominious procession. These breaches of the terms of capitulation exasperated the Madras people as much as they afflicted Labourdonnais; and, by common consent, the British were absolved from their parole by the sins of Dupleix. Clive, for one, escaped in the disguise of a Mussulman;

and the Nabob of Arcot and his French ally had cause to rue the bad faith by which they had uncaged such a foe.

Clive, and others who escaped, betook themselves to Fort St. David's—a small English settlement a few miles south of Pondicherry. There Clive prepared himself for the military vocation for which nature had clearly destined him. As an ensign in the small force commanded by Major Lawrence he prepared not only himself, but the native soldiers, for the deeds waiting to be done. A comrade in the civil service, Haliburton, had devoted himself to making good soldiers of the disorderly band of peons who were in Fort St. George when it was taken by the French; but Haliburton, become a lieutenant for this object, was murdered on parade by a sepoy. who was instantly cut to pieces by his comrades. Clive seems to have been deeply affected by the event, for he declared in after years that his success in securing the fidelity of the sepoys was owing to his care "to entwine his laurels round the opinions and prejudices of the natives." It does not appear that Haliburton had offended those "opinions and prejudices;" nor is there evidence that Clive had exercised his sagacity in considering what must be the issues of a military system based on the principle he professed, and how those issues must be dealt with. Our present concern is only with the facts of

how he felt, and how he acted in inaugurating a native soldiery.

At Fort St. David's the English intrigued with the native chiefs, much as the French had done, and not more creditably. They took sides, and changed sides, in the disputes of rival claimants to the province of Tanjore, under the inducement of the possession of Devi-cottah, a coast station at the mouth of the Coleroon. There was no great honour in the results, any more than in the conception, of this first little war. We obtained Devi-cottah; but we did not improve our reputation for good faith, nor lessen the distance between the French and ourselves in military prestige. But Dupleix was meantime providing the opportunity for Clive to determine whether the Deccan should be under French or English influence.

It was disconcerting to Dupleix for the moment that peace was made between France and England. It seemed to break up his scheme of converting the Deccan into a French dependency; but he presently resolved not to shape his actions by the policy of his own government, but by that of his Mahratta neighbours. The greatest of the southern princes, the Nizam al Mulk, Viceroy of the Deccan, died in 1748; and rivals rose up, as usual, to claim both his throne and the richest province under his rule — the Carnatic. The pretenders on one side applied to the French for assistance, and obtained reinforce-

ments to the extent of 400 French soldiers and 2,000 trained sepoys. This aid secured victory; the opposing prince was slain; and his son, the well-known Mohammed Ali, "the Nabob of Arcot" of the last century, took refuge, with a few remaining troops, at Trichinopoly. In a little while, the French seemed to be supreme throughout the country. Dupleix was deferred to as the arbiter of the destinies of the native princes, while he was actually declared Governor of India, from the Kistna to Cape Comorin — a region as large as France, inhabited by 30,000,000 of people, and defended by a force so large that the cavalry alone amounted to 7,000 under the command of Dupleix. In the midst of this dominion, the English looked like a handful of dispirited and helpless settlers, awaiting the disposal of the haughty Frenchman. Their native ally had lost everything but Trichinopoly; and Trichinopoly itself was now besieged by the Nabob of the Carnatic and his French supporters. Dupleix was greater than even the Mogul sovereign; he had erected a column in his own honour, displaying on its four sides inscriptions in four languages, proclaiming his glory as the first man of the East; and a town had sprung up round this column, called his City of Victory. To the fatalistic mind of the native races it seemed a settled matter that the French rule was supreme, and that the English must perish out of the land.

Major Lawrence had gone home; and the small force of the English had no commander. Clive was as yet only a commissary, with the rank of captain, and regarded more as a civilian than a soldier. He was only five-and-twenty. His superiors were in extreme alarm, foreseeing that when Trichinopoly was taken, the next step would be the destruction of Madras. Nothing could make their position worse; and they caught at every chance of making it better. Clive offered to attack Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, in the hope that this would draw away the besiegers from Trichinopoly; and the offer was accepted. The force consisted of two hundred British and three hundred native soldiers, commanded, under Clive, by four factors and four military men, only two of whom had ever been in action. Everything was against them, from numbers and repute to the weather; but Clive took Arcot, and (what was much more difficult) kept it. The garrison had fled in a panic; but it was invested by 10,000 men before the British had repaired half its dilapidations and deficiencies, or recruited their numbers, now reduced to 320 men in all, commanded by four officers. For fifty days, amidst fatigue, hunger, and a hundred pressing dangers, the little band sustained the siege. It was then that the sepoys made their celebrated proposal about the division of food—an anecdote which is usually impaired

in the telling by the omission of the main circumstance, of the entrance of caste considerations into the case. The sepoys represented to Clive that, though they could not eat food cooked by Christians, the Christians could eat food cooked by natives; and therefore it would be best that the sepoys should cook the rice, pledging themselves to hand over to the Europeans every grain of the rice, and keeping for themselves only the gruel—the water in which the rice was boiled. This was in consideration of the ordinary high feeding of flesh-eating Europeans. At length a rival Mahratta force took heart on seeing that the English could fight, after all, and moved to their relief. The besiegers made haste to storm the fort before succours could arrive. They were repelled with desperate gallantry, under chances which were something more than desperate; and, to the amazement of Clive, the foe decamped in the night, leaving guns and ammunition as booty to the English.

A series of victories followed, and men and opinion came round to the side of the victors. There was no energy at headquarters to sustain Clive in his career; and the consequence was a prevalent belief among the Mahrattas that Clive had a particular species of English about him, unlike all others. In his absence, the enemy appeared again before Fort George, and did much

damage; but Clive came up, and 100 of the French soldiers were killed or taken. He uprooted Dupleix's boasting monument, and levelled the city to the ground, thereby reversing the native impression of the respective destinies of the French and English. Major Lawrence returned. Dupleix's military incapacity was proved, and his personal courage found wanting as soon as fortune deserted him. Trichinopoly was relieved, and the besiegers were beaten, and their candidate prince put to death. Dupleix struggled in desperation for some time longer before he gave up the contest; and Clive had his difficulties in completing the dislodgment of the French. Newly raised sepoys and vagabond recruits were given him to work with; and he had to make his tools and do his work at the same time. He did it; but nearly at the sacrifice of his life. When the British supremacy in the Deccan was completely established, he returned in bad health to England. He had gone out in 1742 a headstrong boy, whom everybody was glad to get rid of. He returned in 1752, a gallant young victor, whom his country delighted to honour. He had begun our military career with the capture of Arcot. He left behind him Dupleix, for whom a summons home in disgrace was on the way, and who died broken-hearted after ten years of conflict with the accusations of his employers and the ingratitude of the State. There

was another whom Clive left behind; the romantic orphan, now a youth of twenty, who had heard, at his desk at Calcutta, of the deeds of Robert Clive, and who was just now moving up the river to an improved position in the factory near the Nabob of Bengal, where he no doubt saw his way opening more favourably to his project of becoming, one day, Hastings of Daylesford. The two young men were soon to meet.

CHAPTER VII.

BEGINNING OF A POLICY.

1740—1760.

"Therefore let any prince or state think soberly of his forces, except his militia of natives be of good and valiant soldiers."

BACON.

"Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
The fatal shadows that walk by us still."

JOHN FLETCHER.

THE French policy in India during the period just reviewed made the Madras Presidency the centre of English interests for the time. After the discomfiture of Dupleix, and his return in deep adversity to Paris, Bengal became the scene of conflict, and the ground on which the English established a power and prestige as wonderful as Dupleix had ever proposed to achieve for France. A few particulars must be noted about Madras, and then we must follow the interest of the story to Calcutta.

In the midst of his glory as the hero of Arcot, and the patriot who had humbled Dupleix and his French policy, Clive met with disappointments in England which disposed him to return to India at the very

time when the Directors were anxious to send him. Three years after his return home, there was a prospect of war with France; and Clive's presence on the Coromandel coast was considered the best security to our Indian establishments that could be provided. So the Directors appointed him Governor of Fort St. David, and the administration made him lieutenant-colonel in the British army; and he went out for the second time in 1755.

The first notice of sepoys in British pay occurs in connection with the early history of Bombay. The first occasion on which they are mentioned with honour is the defence of Arcot, when Clive inspired all his followers with the military spirit which made him a hero from the moment when he left his desk for the field. The sepoys were delighted to see him back again at Fort St. David, and were ready to do anything under his command. At that time none had been enlisted but men of high military tribes—part Mohammedans and part Hindoos, the latter chiefly Rajpoots.* They were small men (from five feet three to five feet five), active, strong, patient and brave in temper, and temperate in diet, but while possessing most of the great qualities of the soldier, requiring peculiar management. As long as no suspicion was awakened in their minds, they were devoted, trustful, patient, and even upright under stress; but when once their

* A warlike race of the first order, originally derived from Rajastan.

high honour was touched, or they suspected deceit or ridicule, they were enemies for ever, as implacable and vindictive as devils. Every mistake on the part of the English, every lapse into forgetfulness that English methods alone will never answer with Asiatic soldiers, has been marked by a mutiny, for above a century past. An order to go round by sea to Bombay produced a mutiny, the natives having an extreme horror of "the black water," as they call the ocean; whereas, when an officer whom they knew told them that he and his European soldiers were going on an enterprise overland, and needed a force of volunteers, there were always enough ready to go. An order to shave is never obeyed, for reasons of native feeling which no commander should be ignorant of; and an attempt to enforce the order has repeatedly induced mutiny. Very few persons in England have any idea of the number of sepoy mutinies which have occurred between the defence of Arcot, which opened our military history in India, and the present calamity, of which the entire series should have forewarned us. It would be too much to say that on all these occasions the British were totally wrong; but it may be safely declared that a sufficient knowledge of the native mind would have explained to us how it was that the mutineers always were vehemently persuaded that they were right. Some promise was supposed to be broken, something was required of them which they could not do, some

insult was offered to their pride or their affections, or some novelty was introduced to which they could not commit themselves till they understood its bearings. They would serve without a murmur while their pay was two or three years in arrear; they would endure famine and other hardship with unsurpassed generosity of spirit; but they required peculiar consideration from their peculiarities of mind and training. It was for the English to consider whether it was worth while to make soldiers of them under such conditions; but neither party is to be blamed for the existence of the conditions. It might be burdensome to have to cultivate the language, and learn the mind, of the native soldier; but he could not be a trustworthy soldier on other terms. Such pains have always been found to answer. Clive succeeded entirely with them; so did Sir Eyre Coote; and so did many more good commanders, during a long series of years. They had them well in hand. They did not waste their authority in making a point of shaven chins and compulsory sea voyages; but they allowed no hesitation or question about such orders as they gave. They carefully studied their men; and they took care that their men should know them. The consequence was that a native officer here and there—such as Mohammed Esof, Cawder Beg, Sheik Ibrahim, and several others, rose into companionship of fame with distinguished European officers, and that officers who were fit to command them, from

Clive and Coote to Lake, Ochterlony, and Christie, could do anything with them, and had little other difficulty than to restrain the enthusiasm of their obedience. Whatever may be the issue of the present mutiny, the memory of a better time will be preserved among the sepoys in two sacred forms—the native traditions of the deaths and funerals of popular European officers, and the monuments—the "regimental shrines"—which grateful rulers and commanders have from time to time erected or countenanced, to the memory of heroic native officers.

The Body-guard at Madras has always held a high rank among the native soldiery — a hundred strong, always expected to be foremost in zeal and efficiency, and always found in its place. It was such a soldiery as that that Clive was greeted by when he re-appeared at Fort St. David, and that he took with him when he was presently after summoned to Bengal.

Just at the time that Nadir Shah was sacking Delhi, in 1739, a remarkable man, of Tartar descent, obtained from the miserable successor of Aurungzebe the post of Viceroy of Bengal, and the added provinces of Orissa and Berar. This man, Aliverdi, met with little resistance within those provinces; and he presently overcame such as was offered. His rule appears to have been singularly good, for the country and the time—spirited, just, and humane; but he could not make his people prosperous and

happy while the Mahrattas were abroad. It has been related that the Mahrattas extended their predatory expeditions to Bengal, tempted by the rich products of the district; and that they left all bare unless they were bought off. The salt of the low coasts and islands supplied a want which has always pressed heavily on the vegetarian population of India. The rice crops were unparalleled—to say nothing of the spice and sugar; and the products of foreign trade were stored up along the rivers. It was on account of the Mahrattas that the English had fortified Calcutta. When Aliverdi was going home to Moorshedabad, after humbling his last domestic enemy, he heard that the Mahrattas had come through the passes from Berar to invade Bengal. He met them bravely with his small force; but some of his troops did not support him well, and he ran fearful risks in getting home. The enemy had been there before him, pillaging the suburbs, and, among other places, Cossimbazar, where Warren Hastings worked at his desk. The enemy chose to remain during the rains; and what they saw of the wealth of the soil gave them all possible inclination to help themselves to it as often as convenient. They collected the revenue of almost the whole country south of the Ganges. Aliverdi beat them out with great slaughter as soon as the weather permitted. Of course they returned next year; and Aliverdi unfortunately paid ransom for his fields and

commerce. The approach of a marauding force is a hideous thing in Bengal. The inhabitants bury their heaviest chattels, and fly to the nearest refuge—the jungle, the hills, or a fortress. The husband carries a bag of grain, the wife the young children; and the growing crops must take their chance. In course of time it was discovered that this ruin need not always be incurred—that the peasantry need not be "wulsa" when British troops were coming, unless, indeed, they brought Indian allies with them; but in Aliverdi's time there was no exception to the rule of flight and ruin when any soldiery was on the march. His subjects were as poor as could well be in the best times; any hostile incursion brought on famine and destruction, and desperate means of prevention were used. One year the Mahratta leader was inveigled and assassinated; another year, the Mahratta leader was killed in battle; but the enemy still came back; and, in a third year, Aliverdi's discontented subjects went over to the Mahrattas, and all seemed over; but he again beat them off, even recovering the capital of Orissa, which he had considered lost. But when he died, in 1756, in old age, he had only impoverished his people by annual levies of blackmail, without purchasing with it any security from danger. Leaving no sons, he was succeeded by a youthful grandson—the Surajah Dowla, whose name was so familiar to English ears during the latter half

of the last century. It is enough to say of him that he was one of the worst known specimens of the worst known order of men—Asiatic princes who are not nomades. He had always hated the English; and his first act, after securing the property of all his relations for his own use, was to quarrel with the British. He demanded that the finance minister of his deceased uncle, the Governor of Dacca, should be delivered up to him from his refuge at Calcutta, with the treasure he was supposed to have saved; and he remonstrated with the English governor for improving the British defences, in anticipation of a war with France. Instead of accepting the explanation afforded, he seized the factory at Cossimbazar, and captured its chief, Mr. Watts. The English had no Clive among them at the moment, and resistance does not seem to have occurred to them. They offered an abject submission; and the Nabob marched to Calcutta, to seize the enormous wealth which he supposed to be laid up there, and to show himself a great man in comparison with the contemptible foreigners.

It is an interesting thing to pause, at this point of the history, to see how those personages were engaged who were to shape and control coming events, or to be controlled by them. Dupleix was off the scene. He had originated the scheme of European supremacy in India, and had handed it over to the

rival power. His colleague in presidential government, Labourdonnais, had created the instrument of a sepoy force, which also remained in English hands. Both were to suffer from the ingratitude of the State at home, and to die in misery. Thus it was with the rival European party. As for the natives—Surajah Dowla (the actual sovereign of Bengal, while called Viceroy) was getting drunk, killing flies, putting beasts and birds to the torture, for pastime, and merchants, when he wanted their treasure. He informed his courtiers that there were not 10,000 men in all Europe, and he should treat the English as he pleased.

He had very close relations with a few wealthy men, as needy and despotic sovereigns are wont to have. One of the rich merchants whom the Viceroy cultivated for the sake of his usefulness was Omichund, an able intriguer, living at Calcutta, who played off his arts on his sovereign and on the English as suited his convenience, now promising the Viceroy to cast all the British wealth into his treasury, and then agreeing with the English to depose the Viceroy, and put Meer Jaffier, the native commander-in-chief, in his place. Another of these rich and powerful subjects was the well-known Nuncomar—the Hindoo Brahmin, who was, perhaps, the greatest Bengalee of his time—politic, wealthy, sacred in a religious view, and invested with all possible secular deference. Meer Jaffier was at the head of the army, hardly yet, perhaps,

conceiving of his approaching sovereignty, any more than Surajah Dowla of his own abasement. A Mussulman, Mohammed Reza Khan, able and active, was always engaged in affairs; but he little dreamed that he should soon be for seven years the most powerful subject and agent in the Bengal territory. These were the native gentlemen who were unconsciously awaiting their respective wonderful changes of fortune. As for the British, above a hundred of them, dreaming of returning home in splendour, after having made haste to be rich, were being precipitated towards as fearful a doom as any on record. In a few nights they were to die together, in an agony from which the imagination recoils at the distance of a century. One more, Warren Hastings, was refusing the ordinary time-killing amusements of his countrymen, in order to recreate his intellect with geometrical studies, and to charm his imagination by exploring the beauties of Persian literature. He did not anticipate a meeting with the famous and lucky Robert Clive, nor indulge in greater dreams than the old one of redeeming the estates of his ancestors. As for Clive, he had recently landed at Fort St. David, and had no conception that men of so many natures were unconsciously waiting for him at Calcutta—waiting for the creation, under his hand, of a British policy in India.

Surajah Dowla was as cowardly as cruel tyrants usually are; but he thought he might safely drive

away the English, and take possession of their wealth, keeping a few of their chief men to torment, for the gratification of his hatred; and there was not so much rashness in his scheme as might appear. In Bengal it was still believed, as not long before in Madras, that the British were only traders, and could not fight. Their conduct, when Surajah Dowla marched his great army to Calcutta, justified this notion. It appeared before the fort on the 18th of June, 1756: and as the fort really was very weak, and no Clive was there, everybody was in favour of retreat to the ships. The Governor fled first and fastest, and the military commander next: no proper arrangements were made for the embarkation, and all was confusion and selfish panic. Surajah Dowla was presently seated in state in the great hall of the factory, triumphing over the English captives who were brought before him. He complained of the smallness of the treasure, but promised to spare the lives of the prisoners. He went to rest without giving orders as to what was to be done with them. There was an apartment which had been sometimes used as a strong-room for prisoners—unobjectionable in itself, but, being only 18 feet square, fit only for two or three persons at once, in such a climate as that of Calcutta. It had two windows, was above ground, and in no respect like "a dungeon" or "a black hole." Yet it will be called "the Black

Hole of Calcutta" as long as the language lasts, on account of what happened there that night. The prisoners, in number 146, were ordered into this apartment; and when it was declared to be full, more and more were driven in at the point of the bayonet: and there they were kept through the summer night. No entreaties or frantic cries for release or air were of any avail: the Viceroy was asleep, and must not be disturbed. While he was enjoying his airy rest, the English were dying off fast; and when he drew near his waking, their shrieks had sunk into a few low moans. When the door was at length opened in the morning, 23 of the 146 were alive, but so shrunk and ghastly that their own families would not have known them. Of the dead, some were as far gone into decay as if they had been buried for days. The murder was not intentional: but there was cruelty enough without that. The guards came with lights to the barred windows to laugh at the delirious wretches struggling within; the Viceroy threatened the survivors with impalement if they did not confess where the treasure was; and he caused them to be ironed and half starved. The surviving Englishwoman he took into his own harcem. He boasted, in letters to Delhi, of having expelled the English, and abolished the very name of Calcutta, which he named Aliganore—*God's port.* It was August before the news reached Madras;

and, in spite of Clive's impatience, it was October before the forces were off, and December before they reached Calcutta, having found the fugitive English collected at Fulta, a small place further down the river.

Surajah Dowla came down from his capital, and, already pining after the profits of the English trade, proposed terms. He offered to reinstate the British, with compensation for their losses. Clive was almost the only person concerned who was not disposed to accept the terms at once. The Company's agents, the Madras Government, and, as he was well aware, the Directors at home all considered reinstatement to be all that could be desired. But he was aware that Surajah Dowla was intriguing with the French, with the intention of bringing them down upon the British, on all convenient occasions. This was the time, Clive decided, to establish the English in Bengal, as on the Coromandel coast; and he obtained the concurrence of the naval commander, Admiral Watson, in his scheme for humbling the French first, and then deposing the Viceroy. In the attack on Chandernagore, Admiral Watson operated by water, and Clive by land, with complete success. The French settlement, with all its stores, at once fell into their hands.

The agents in the other scheme were Omichund, the great Hindoo merchant already spoken of, and Mr. Watts, who was taken at Cossimbazar. A plot already existed among the Viceroy's subjects, in

which his finance minister, his commander-in-chief, Meer Jaffier (already mentioned), and other conspicuous men were implicated; and Clive overbore all the scruples of the committee at Calcutta about embracing the scheme. When the Viceroy was distrustful, Omichund soothed him; and he was so ready to do the same thing on the English side, that Clive not only put no faith in him, but deceived and betrayed him as he deceived and betrayed one master, if not more. Clive even stooped so low as to interpolate a duplicate deed, and to forge a signature, in order to retain the great Hindoo's services as long as they were wanted. When all was ready, Clive wrote an upbraiding letter to the Viceroy, who at once marched to Plassey to meet the British. There would have been no difficulty in beating him, vast as his forces were, if Clive's native confederates could have been trusted to fulfil their engagements. But they did not come over; and the British had only 3,200 men to oppose to the 68,000 assembling on the opposite bank of the river. For the only time in his life, Clive held a council of war. It was decided to retreat, and he acquiesced—in all sincerity at the moment; but his spirit rose as the night drew on. He transferred his force to the left bank of the river, and the next day, June 23, 1757, fought the battle of Plassey, which revolutionized Bengal, and inaugurated the English policy in Hindostan. Surajah Dowla fled. Meer Jaffier, who had held back till

he saw which way the battle would go, came forward with hesitation and fear as to his reception. Knowing that nobody better was to be had, Clive received him as the new Nabob of Bengal. He was the tool by whom the British were to govern the whole north-east of Hindostan. On the first conference after the installation of the new ruler, Omichund was present in all his dignity, expecting to receive his promised honours and rewards. He was abruptly told that he had been outwitted in his treachery; and the instant consequence was a fit, ending in idiocy. After a few months of childishness, most affecting in one so conspicuous for sagacity, and the ability which the natives admire most in their eminent men, he died. Clive had not contemplated this, if we may judge by his offers to Omichund of public employment, on the recovery of his health by a devout pilgrimage; but the great English captain considered it enough to say in after-times that he had only turned the intriguer's own arts against himself in an emergency which required all means of security.

The new Nabob caused his predecessor to be murdered, and placed the treasures of Surajah Dowla at the disposal of Clive and the committee. Clive accepted prodigious wealth; but he might have had ten times as much by merely refraining from refusal. The circumstances were new, and no rules or orders existed to meet the case. We hear now of "Lord Clive's Fund." This fund is the income of the great

legacy left him by his puppet Nabob, Meer Jaffier; and the proceeds were from the first applied to the relief of the invalids of the service. The Company lodged supreme power in his hands as soon as they heard of the battle of Plassey, and the virtual acquisition of Bengal by the British. Clive had much to do to work the new policy of ruling great Asiatic countries by means of native princes. At one time he had to sustain the Nabob against attacks from without; at another, to humble the Dutch as he had humbled the French; and not seldom to guard against the conspiracies between his own tool and enemies who bribed him from his allegiance; but he did it all—partly through the attachment of his adoring sepoys, whom he had brought from Madras, and multiplied into a considerable force—partly through the consciousness which existed all round that he alone could uphold the new order which he had created; but chiefly because he himself willed it. It will be seen that he had not looked forward enough, while meeting difficulties as they arose; and he had scarcely sailed for England, in 1760, when embarrassments appeared which made his successor and the committee aware that he would probably have to come out again.

Where was young Hastings during these years? He had joined Clive's expedition with enthusiasm when it came up from Madras in December, 1756. But Clive soon discovered that Hastings had abilities

which marked him out for political business; and he appointed him resident agent at the new Nabob's court. Soon after Clive's departure in 1760, Hastings was wanted at Calcutta, as a member of council. He was in full training for his future work.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEGINNING OF A GENERAL GOVERNMENT.

1760—1774.

"Mais, en connaissant votre condition naturelle, usez des moyens qui lui sont propres, et ne prétendez pas régner par une autre voie que par celle qui vous fait roi."—PASCAL.

"We are not roasting; and already we are basting."—*Proverb.*

IT is a recognised fact that a bad odour hangs about our connection with India, even at this day, among peoples and generations who can give no clear account of the grounds of their unfavourable impressions. Among the continental nations, in the United States, and throughout whole classes at home, and among the elderly generation in particular, a vague notion exists that there is something disgraceful in our tenure of India; that the native population has been somehow sacrificed to our ambition and cupidity; and that the great Asiatic peninsula has always been a land of license to us, where selfish men could indulge their passions, and extort luxury at the moment, and wealth for the future, from an inferior race, made to suffer

for our gratification. While the great multitude have held some such notion as this, a very small minority has wondered how so enormous a mistake could exist. The few who have taken an interest in the India of our own day have dwelt upon the features of modern Indian life till they wonder whether the history of any nation presents a picture of a more virtuous devotion to public duty. They point to the honourable mediocrity of fortune of Indian officials, the small salaries, the refusal of gifts from natives, the hard work, the *désagrémens* of life in such a climate, and, above all, to the succession of great and good men who have grown up, lived, and too often died, in India; and they ask whether history has anything better to show in regard to any great dependency of any empire. There is, as usual, reason at the bottom of both persuasions; and we have now arrived at the period of Indian experience which reconciles the two. The more advantageous view is now true in the main; and the other was true a century ago. The state of things was, moreover, as inevitable as it was detestable.

It was the transition period between native despotism and British government. Territorial possession (to the extent which made us rulers of the people) was suddenly obtained, almost without intention, and altogether without preparation. Principalities and peoples became ours before any

one had thought how they were to be ruled, or how the structure and movement of society were to be sustained at all. If the question was by chance asked, what was to be done with the provinces and their inhabitants, the readiest answer was that they would be governed by the native princes, under us; the supposition being that the various tribes had some sort of constitution which bridged over all intervals, and all turmoils incident to princely government. Here was the great mistake. No such constitutions existed. The rule of the princes, whether hereditary or usurping, was a simple absolutism, with which the spirit of Mohammedanism was thoroughly congenial, and to which even the old religious institutions of Hindooism were made subservient; and our plan of using the native princes as our deputies merely rendered their subjects dependent, one and all, on our will. Every Englishman was master of every native he came across, for there was no constitution, no appropriate law, no organization whatever to be appealed to. The few of our countrymen who had gone out in the service of the Company, on very small salaries, and with no very elevated objects, suddenly found the treasure-chambers of absolute princes thrown open to them; and when those were emptied, there remained the sources whence they had been filled. The competitors for native thrones begged for British support,

promising in requital the wealth of the ruler who was to be unseated; and every such petty revolution brought its own premium to those who could effect it. English traders had not only the pick and choice of all markets, but they held all producers in their grasp; and they could lay hands on all products at their own price, and make it a condition of all transactions that presents should be offered to the powerful party. They could always patronize robbers, and ruin everybody, unless propitiated by gifts; and it may be doubted whether the Danes in England, the Spaniards in Mexico, or the Mahrattas in Aliverdi's time, were more disastrously oppressive to a harassed multitude of native inhabitants than the Englishmen who were making their fortunes in Bengal while Clive was in England recruiting his health, from 1760 to 1765. The people who were within reach of the hills went there, and became robbers. The peasants fled to the jungle—not from British troops, but from the face of a British merchant traversing the country in state. Whole villages were deserted when a European was coming along the road. The country was going out of cultivation, and the native manufacturers were discontinuing their industry from year to year, just when it was necessary to raise more and more money for the Company at home; and hence new and more stringent methods of extortion were perpetually devised. No party concerned was less aware of all this than the Direc-

tors in London. They saw how rich the English became in India, from Clive who returned at thirty-four with an income of 40,000*l.* a year, to the humblest agent who, not liking India, came home at five-and-twenty with a competence for life. The Directors heard, as other people did, of the pomps and splendours of the native courts, and also of the prodigious fertility of the soil in Bengal; and they naturally expected to derive a handsome revenue from both land and commerce. They could not fully know how their servants grew rich by private trading; and they were naturally the last to hear of the bribes and oppressions by which the people were sunk in poverty. They shaped their demands in proportion to what they saw; and their urgency was so extreme as to cause constant embarrassment to their own governors at the presidencies. Their blindness and the little monopolies of their servants must come to an end, sooner or later, as every adventurer in the whole set well knew: the great object with them all was to delay the disclosure of the poverty of India as long as possible; and under the strength of this overwhelming temptation the greatest men sank as well as the meanest. Clive and Hastings committed crimes as well as the little tyrants who took the poor weaver's finest muslins, and paid less than the price of the cotton.

If our young people desire to know how the Anglo-Indians of ninety years ago were regarded in

England in their own day, they may find the evidence in short compass in Cowper's poem of "Expostulation," where the national view is fairly expressed in a dozen lines:

> "Hast thou, though suckled at fair Freedom's breast,
> Exported slavery to the conquered East?
> Pulled down the tyrants India served with dread,
> And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead?
> Gone thither, armed and hungry; returned full,
> Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
> A despot big with power obtained by wealth,
> And that obtained by rapine and by stealth?
> With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
> But left their virtues and thine own behind?
> And, having trucked thy soul, brought home the fee,
> To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?"

Worse even than the cupidity was the treachery. Clive's treatment of Omichund was truly a national calamity. Recent times have so fully proved the value in India of our good faith, so remarkable a contrast to the prevailing policy of native rulers, that there is no need to say a word of the benefits we have derived from an Englishman's word being the only security the natives know. It is referred to only to illustrate the mischief caused by Clive's interpolation and forgery in Omichund's case. As thieves have a keen sense of the convenience of honesty, so have intriguers of the dignity of good faith; and Clive inflicted more injury on our Indian empire than many years could repair when he (as he said with shocking levity) turned the arts of the great

Hindoo against himself. During the same interval, the ignorant traders who were representing us in Bengal were over-riding the native tribunals, jesting at the native faith and customs, and setting aside all observances for their own convenience or amusement; so that a state of anarchy was inevitable, and Clive was as much wanted at the factory at Calcutta as he had been before the walls of Arcot, or on the field at Plassey.

Everything was going wrong when the Company applied to Clive to return to Bengal. The confusion was too much for the capacity of successive governors. Meer Jaffier and a rival pretender to the vice-royalty were set up and pulled down in turns; and at every see-saw the adherents of the one pillaged those of the other, to bribe the English. Nothing more could be levied from the people, and the Company could obtain no adequate remittances. Princes outside the frontier rose against us; and the native soldiery mutinied.

The sepoys complained of various breaches of promise, and refused to obey orders. Their coolness under sentence, and the singular dignity with which some of the condemned claimed to be blown away from right-hand and not left-hand guns, because they had always fought on the right, and considered it the post of honour, melted their executioners, and witnesses who had been less moved at Admiral Byng's last scene. While the troops were resisting orders, their com-

manders were quarrelling. In every department of the Company's affairs, there was nothing but confusion, failure, and prospect of total disorganization.

Clive returned with a title, and with the dignity of Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the British possessions in Bengal; and the first thing he discovered was that though the Company had, as they supposed, put a stop to the traffic in presents between their servants and the political intriguers of the province, the throne of the Viceroy was virtually put up to sale, and jobbed by the Company's agents. He at once enforced the Directors' command that all presents and gratuities, in any shape, received from natives, should be handed over to the Company, when the value exceeded 4,000 rupees; and that every gift under that amount and exceeding 1,000 rupees, must be sanctioned by the President and Council. He put a stop to private commercial speculation; and when some of the angry gentlemen struck work, he wrote to Madras for substitutes, and sent the malcontents home. He enlarged the incomes thus suddenly restricted by awarding the salt monopoly to the Company's agents—the Directors being resolved against increasing their salaries. The military officials carried their resistance to reform so far as to conspire for his discomfiture, and resign on the same day, to the number of two hundred. It was then that Lord Clive found the advantage of his policy in attaching the sepoys. He separated them from their

mutinous superiors, and threw himself upon them, while awaiting the arrival of European officers from Fort George, and training some civilians from the Calcutta service. He could not have carried his points if he had been hampered by the "assistance" of the pre-existing committee of management, and he therefore named as his select committee himself and the two gentlemen who had attended him from England.

His territorial policy was soon declared. He wrote home that he had long foreseen the approach of the time when the Company must determine whether they should or should not "take all" into their own hands, and rule with an army at their back. The native states expected this, he said; and the English must be the real Nabobs, under a merely nominal vassalage to Delhi; whether they assumed the name, or still allowed a puppet to wear it. The Mogul sovereign was applied to, with presents; and he granted (because he could not refuse) a warrant whereby the Company was authorized to collect the revenues of the whole territory of Bengal, with its adjuncts of Orissa and Behar. This demonstration, and the mere presence of Clive, intimidated the neighbouring viceroys: and they at once drew back from the frontier they had intended to invade. He seemed to have set matters to rights in the course of a year and a half, when his state of health compelled him to go home. He had seven years more to live. They were years of great

trouble and failing powers of body and mind; and he died by his own hand at the age of forty-eight.

He was no sooner gone home than it was discovered that affairs were much further from being settled than he had supposed. He had mistaken the influence of his own strong will for the working of his machinery, as strong-willed men are apt to do. Neither he nor any one else could have an idea of the accession of another man of strong will and extraordinary ability, by whom the work he had left should be carried on as vigorously as it could be by himself. Warren Hastings had taken a disgust to India, and had gone home as soon as he was rich enough to do so—that is, in 1764, the year before Clive's last voyage out; and Clive had been nearly two years at home again before Hastings had lost his money by speculation, and found it necessary to go forth again, if he was ever to be owner of Daylesford. In the interval it became clear that Clive's methods would not work well in any department of administration, though his reforms had improved the moral strength and reputation of the English body. It was impossible that the fiction of subservience to the Mogul sovereign could run parallel with the exercise of absolute power for any length of time. It could be nothing more than a device for passing over from one territorial tenure to another; and it embarrassed both the foreign and domestic policy of Bengal. It was in reality our English strength which dominated

over the neighbouring viceroys, while the empty name of the Delhi sovereign was used. The internal management of the territory had to be confided (with the exception of military affairs) to a native minister; and it was difficult, in the first place, to fill the office well, and, in the next, to reconcile its existence with any real care of the land and the people. Whether a Mussulman or a Hindoo was appointed to that post of wealth and dignity, mischief was sure to ensue; and it was not possible to answer for good government while it remained in the hands of either. Thus, through this one political fiction, whereby Clive hoped to effect the English ascendancy in peace and quiet, there were always three obstacles in the way of honest English government—the nominal Sovereign of Hindostan at Delhi; his nominal Viceroy at Moorshedabad (his master and our servant); and the Prime Minister of the Viceroy, appointed by us, but wholly unqualified for doing our work, while sure to make mischief from being a member of one of two opposing native races.

Within the establishment at Calcutta, matters went no better. The committee was apt to split into factions, as such bodies usually are, and the more virulently the further they are from London. The President had only a casting vote in council, in case of an equal division; and nothing of importance could be done without the authority of the committee. Under these difficulties, everything went wrong. The reve-

nue fell off, though the arrangements at home between the Company and the Government supposed a large annual income: there were bitter conflicts among authorities and parties in London; and, in the midst of the confusion, a famine happened in India which exceeded in horror almost every famine recorded in history. There is no need to dwell on a spectacle which any one can conceive for himself. It is enough to say that more than a third of the inhabitants of Bengal perished in it. Some of the Company's agents were then found to have traded in rice, in defiance of Clive's reforms and the Directors' prohibitions; report magnified the offence, and made out a strong case of cupidity and cruelty—probably much stronger than the facts would warrant: the unpopularity of Anglo-Indians in London increased every day; the persuasion was strengthened in the popular mind that the whole concern would soon end in a crash; the eagerness of the proprietary for large dividends was sharpened accordingly; and in 1771 an augmentation of the dividend was insisted upon, though it was known that the treasury at Calcutta was nearly empty, and that the Company was in debt all over India. Such a state of adversity, and such evidences of misgovernment, threw the Company very much into the power of parliament. In order to obtain the means of going on at all, by loans and otherwise, it was necessary to submit to very hard conditions. From 12½ per cent.

per annum the dividends were to be reduced to about half; the territorial possessions of the Company were treated as liable to use in the way of pledge; and proposals were offered to change the entire constitution of the Company. The Proprietors and Directors were to permit a raising of their respective qualifications; and—what is more to our purpose in reviewing the story of the English in India—a Governor-General was to be installed at Calcutta, to rule over all the three presidencies—that of Bengal being the first in rank: four councillors were to be the cabinet of the new potentate; and a Supreme Court of Judicature was to be established at Calcutta, constituted of a Chief Justice and three other judges. The first body of new rulers were to be nominated by parliament for a term of five years, after which the nominations would revert to the Directors, subject to the approbation of the Crown: and all the functionaries of the Government and the courts were interdicted from all implication in commercial transactions.

These new arrangements became law in the Regulating Act of 1773. Warren Hastings had the year before been appointed Governor at Calcutta, in consequence of the ability he had manifested, from the time of his return to India, in retrieving the commercial condition of Madras, after its decline from the conversion of the merchants of that presidency into soldiers and diplomatists. Warren Has-

tings was the first Governor-General of India. We shall see how the introduction of English methods of law, and the mingling of English pretensions with Asiatic facts of government answered under the superintendence of a man of eminent and appropriate ability.

CHAPTER IX.

ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD.

1774—1785.

"A heart like mine,
A heart that glows with the pure Julian fire,—
If bright ambition from her craggy seat
Display the radiant prize, will mount undaunted,
Gain the rough heights, and grasp the dangerous honour."
GRAY.

"What is here?——Gold!"—SHAKSPERE.

THE first Governor-General of India must be "the observed of all observers;" and his period of rule must be a marked era in the history, not only of the dependency itself, but of the country to which it belonged. If it must necessarily be so from the excitement of the public mind at home, under the agitating and disgusting news from Bengal in 1773, there was something in the mind and manners of the first Governor-General which rendered the crisis more marked, and the national interest more intense. Not a few of us who are living to receive the recent portentous tidings from India may remember the countenance and bearing of Warren Hastings; for he lived till 1818. It was a countenance not to be

forgotten by any one who had ever seen it, full of intellectual serenity, thoughtful, somewhat melancholy, but resolved and confident. His figure was small, but anything but insignificant, in connection with a demeanour of natural dignity, a complexion which revealed a life of toil, and a head which proved a capacity for it. When he sailed for India the second time, in 1769, he left the impression of this countenance on the minds of the first men of a day of great men, and with it a high respect for his literary and political cultivation. Johnson looked up to him for the philosophy he quoted from his Oriental learning, and our great scholars for that Oriental learning itself. Our statesmen could hardly have given him credit, then or at any time, for comprehensive political views; but his constant adequacy to the occasion, his evident familiarity with the native mind and modes of life, and his strong convictions of what ought to be done at a time when the responsible parties were only too thankful to be told what they ought to do, pointed out Warren Hastings as one for whom an office of high authority ought to be created at such a time, if it would not otherwise exist. He at once took in hand, as has been seen, the mischief which had arisen at Madras from the conversion of traders into military and political officials; and his being promoted to the highest post followed almost as a matter of course.

It should be borne in mind, in studying the history of this time, that the worst things we know of the miseries of the inhabitants are told in the form of lamentation and remonstrance expressed by the Directors to their servants in India. The letters are extant in which they complained that every attempt they had made to reform abuses had increased them, and that the industrial classes of natives were more oppressed for every effort to protect them. "Youths" were suffered to domineer over whole communities, even as sovereigns, and to enrich themselves by monopolies, at the expense of the natives on the one hand, and of the Company on the other. The native merchants no longer appeared in the markets; the products found their way to Europe through every channel but the British; and the Company must be ruined unless an able head and hand could inaugurate on the spot a new system, first legalised at home. Such are the complaints of the Directors in their correspondence of April, 1773.

Who were these terrible "youths" who excited so much indignation in high quarters? They were the Supervisors, afterwards Collectors, a body of officials whose advent marked the transition of British India from being a new field of commerce to being a possession, requiring political administration. The failure of Clive's plan of double government, under which all the old evils remained, while the authority to deal with them was abstracted,

compelled a resort to some new method of obtaining the dues of the British establishment. The native collectors declared that they could not obtain money, the Mogul governors declared that they could not get their commands obeyed, in the administration of criminal and civil justice; and the people meantime pleaded for protection from every kind of spoliation. In 1769 it was decided that servants of the Company should be dispersed throughout the country, each superintending a district from a central station whence he could observe and control the native officers in their work of collecting the revenue, and also of administering justice. As these overlookers were soon found to need overlooking themselves, two councils were appointed for the purpose, to sit at Moorshedabad and at Patna. No benefit being observable at the end of two years, and the Supervisors' reports disclosing a fearful state of corruption and misery, the Directors at home decided to take the whole affair into their own hands, dispensing with all native intervention. Unaware that they were thus destroying the whole political structure of India, and causing a graver revolution than any invaders of the country were ever answerable for, they announced their decision, and desired their agents in Bengal to carry it out. The council at Calcutta, of which Mr. Hastings was then the most active member, undertook the business, set aside old modes of letting lands and levying revenue, deter-

mined in three days what new one would answer best, and converted their Supervisors into Collectors, with power which enabled them to do what the Directors complained of so bitterly in the spring of 1773. Their offices were now as much political as commercial; and the institution of the new scheme may be regarded as the half-way station between the commercial objects with which the Company entered the country, and the time (in 1834) when their commercial function had dissolved under the action of free-trade principles, and they remained a body with purely territorial functions and attributes.

The Governor-General was not at once the potential personage he has since become. The necessity of ruling by a Dictator (a dictator on the spot, though responsible to superiors at home) had not yet become obvious: and the Governor-General had no superiority in council, except the casting vote in case of an equal division. Whether he could govern or not depended chiefly on whether he had a party of two in the council. Two out of the four, with his own casting vote, were enough; and without it, he was not really governor. This is not the place in which to follow the history of the first general council and its factions, apart from the consequences to British interests. It must suffice to say that at the outset, three out of four of the council (and those the new officials from England) were opposed to Hastings.

It has been related that the internal administration of Bengal under Clive's "double system" was managed by the Nabob's prime-minister. This functionary had a salary of 100,000*l.* a year, and enjoyed a high dignity and immense power. One man who aspired to hold the office in Clive's time was the great Hindoo, Nuncomar, already described as eminent in English eyes for his wealth and his abilities, and much more in native estimation for his sanctity as a Brahmin, and his almost unbounded social power. He seems to have been a sort of Wolsey, if we can imagine Wolsey waiting for office at the pleasure of a foreign authority. In one way he was more exalted than Wolsey; his life was regarded as absolutely sacred, as a Brahmin: whereas nobody's life was secure near Henry VIII. The Maharajah Nuncomar was a great scoundrel—there is no doubt of that; and his intrigues, supported by forgeries, were so flagrant as to prevent his appointment to the premiership under the Nabob. Such vices were less odious in Bengal than almost anywhere else; but they were inconvenient, as well as disgusting, to the British; and this was the reason why Clive set aside Nuncomar, and appointed his rival competitor, Mohammed Reza Khan, though he was highly reluctant to place the highest office in Bengal in the hands of a Mussulman. This Mussulman administered affairs for seven years before Hastings

became Governor-General; and he also had the charge of the infant Nabob, after Surajah Dowla died. We have seen how dissatisfied the Directors were with the proceeds of their Bengal dominions. Nuncomar planted his agents everywhere; and in London especially; and these agents persuaded the Directors that Mohammed Reza Khan was to blame for their difficulties and their scanty revenues. Confident in this information, they sent secret orders to Hastings to arrest the great Mussulman, and everybody who belonged to him, and to hear what Nuncomar had to say against him. A similar disgrace was to be inflicted on the minister who held the same office in Bahar, Shitab-Roy, a brave man, devoted to the British. He was arrested at Patna when the greater Bengal minister was seized at Moorshedabad. Hastings announced this act of obedience in a letter to the Directors, dated Sept. 1, 1772, and informed his employers that he had kept the matter so secret that the members of the Council knew nothing of it till the accused ministers were on the road to Calcutta. While they were still in confinement the old system was swept away, and their offices with it. The young Nabob was committed to the charge of one of his father's wives, and his income was diminished one half. When the new system was fairly established, the two ministers were released, Shitab-Roy received an apology, and

all possible consideration; but he was already broken-hearted, and he presently died. The great Mussulman did not come out altogether so well from the trial, as Nuncomar had no scruples as to what he alleged, and how he supported it; but the Mussulman minister was not punished, and Nuncomar hated Hastings accordingly. He bided his time, storing up materials of accusation with which to overwhelm the Governor at the first turn of his fortunes. That turn was when the majority of the Council were opposed to the Governor-General, and rendered him helpless in his office; and Nuncomar then presented himself, with offers of evidence to prove all manner of treasons and corruptions against Hastings. Hastings was haughty; the councils were tempestuous. Hastings prepared to resign, though he was aware that the opinion of the English in Bengal was with him; and Nuncomar was the greatest native in the country, visited by the Council, and resorted to by all his countrymen who ventured to approach him. Foiled in the Council, Hastings had recourse to the Supreme Court. He caused Nuncomar to be arrested on a charge brought ostensibly by a native of having forged a bond six years before. After a long trial for an offence which appeared very slight to Bengalee natives in those days, the culprit was found guilty by a jury of Englishmen, and condemned to death

by the judges. Monstrous as was the idea, in native minds, of hanging any man for so common an act as forgery—(much like lying with us)—it was more than monstrous—it was incredible that a Brahmin should be executed. Though he knew this, Hastings did not encourage the Chief Justice to use his power of respiting offenders pending a reference home. The Council declared that Nuncomar should be rescued at the last moment, if no other means remained. The British, many of whom had paid homage to Nuncomar in his greatness, were earnest to have him respited. The natives rejoiced or sorrowed, according as they were Mussulmans or Hindoos; but none of them appeared to have conceived that the great and sacred Brahmin would be really put to death. He was put to death, however, and by hanging. The people acted as if the final curse of Heaven had fallen upon them; and their frantic horror must have moved even the stern soul of Hastings. He was not a philosopher, nor a statesman "looking before and after," and therefore he perhaps failed to be aware on that portentous day that he had caused a bottomless gulf to yawn between the Hindoos and the Anglo-Indians, and that he would himself have to meet, on this side the grave, a day of retribution for this deed. The execution took place on the 5th of August, 1776. Mohammed Reza Khan was restored to that part of his former

office which gave him the charge of the young Nabob and of the royal household at Moorshedabad.

Another of the guilty deeds by which Hastings compromised our national character while his ability was extending our power, was as audacious as the sacrifice of Nuncomar, and, at the same time, as sordid as any theft. The Mogul sovereign, Shah Alum, sunk in weakness and ignominy, lived at Allahabad, while his deputy, an able Rohilla chief, managed affairs at Delhi. The Rohillas were the warrior gentlemen of the Mussulman body in India, imported from beyond the north-western mountains, ranking high among the Affghan troops settled in India, and peaceably established as landholders in the plains extending from within seventy miles of the city of Delhi to the spurs of the Himalaya. While the Rohilla chief lived to administer affairs at Delhi, the nominal Emperor subsisted on the tribute (nearly 300,000*l.* a year) paid him by the English for the Bengal provinces. He was restless in his palace at Allahabad, and ever on the watch for the means of returning to Delhi, though perhaps with some apprehension as to what might become of the districts of Allahabad and Corah (made over to him by the Company) if he shifted his quarters. In 1770 the Rohilla deputy at Delhi died; and the Emperor then resolved to do what he had long meditated—he called in the Mahrattas to help him to his throne. They were abundantly ready to

gratify him: and, as soon as he was sufficiently involved to be unable to retract, and helpless in his camp in the midst of the rains, their chiefs offered him ruinous terms as the price of their assistance. On the 25th of December, 1772, he re-entered his capital, carrying himself as if he were really a great Mogul sovereign, while feeling himself the victim of the Mahrattas on the one hand and the English on the other; and exactly a twelvemonth later, he opened the gates of Delhi to the Mahrattas, in their character of besiegers, pressing him for the fulfilment of their hard terms. As for the English—Hastings made the discovery that it was absurd to keep faith with a nominal sovereign who was the tool of other people, as the Emperor now was of the Mahrattas; and he therefore gave notice that the annual tribute would not be paid again, and that the concession of the districts of Allahabad and Corah was revoked. These districts were so placed as to be more costly than profitable to the Company; whereas they lay conveniently to hand for the Viceroys of Oude—vassals of the Emperor. The Oude Nabob, Sujah-ood-Dowla, desired the lands: Hastings wanted money; and the parties struck a bargain. The Nabob purchased the districts for about half a million sterling. As for the Mahratta auxiliaries, they carried the Emperor and his forces northward with them, and seized first the lands of the late deputy, who had served his master so long and so faithfully.

The bravest efforts of the Rohillas failed to save their high-lying, unfenced, and rich plains from being laid waste; but their ruin was accomplished by Hastings, in his eager desire for money. He had already sold to Oude lands stolen from the Emperor: he now sold to Oude, in a different form, the brave and unoffending Rohillas. Sujah Dowla dared not encounter them unless reinforced by the best troops obtainable. The English troops (including their native regiments) were the best; and they were found obtainable. Hastings negotiated a loan of the British army, and received in consideration of its services, 400,000*l.*, clear of all expenses. Hastings himself put this transaction on record in a report to his council. He met the Oude Nabob at Benares in September, 1773; he "encouraged" the Nabob's desire to acquire the Rohilla country, bearing in mind the distresses of the Company, and the importunity of the Directors for money. By the arrangement then and there entered into, the military expenses of the Company would be reduced nearly one-third; "the forty lakhs would afford an ample supply to our treasury: the Viceroy would be freed from a troublesome neighbourhood, and his dominions be much more defensible." The considerations which were not referred to were—why a peaceable and honourable people should be invaded, and what England would say to having her name mixed up in such a business, for mere money, and her troops

sold to a rich bidder, to do such thief's work as this. What England thought of it, Hastings had the opportunity of seeing when, thirteen years later, he heard his act arraigned by Burke in the Commons, as the ground of an impeachment; and, again, fifteen years after the Benares *tête-à-tête*, when the *élite* of the British nation, assembled at Westminster, listened to his impeachment for various crimes and misdemeanours, of which the foremost, as the most flagrant, was the Rohilla war. The Directors expressed the strongest displeasure at this, and at other deeds of Hastings; but he noticed their remonstrances in his own way—by a sneer; saying that they should not press him so urgently for remittances if they were so hard to please as to his methods of raising money.

When the majority in Council shifted to his side, by accidents of death and other change, he extended his views, stiffened his will against all obstacles, and resolved to set his heel on the neck of his adversaries, while making the English power paramount throughout India. He was still embarrassed with financial difficulties; and his success in raising money from Oude tempted him to look round for some other rich potentate who might relieve his wants. There was no richer city then than Benares, the holy city, crammed with the gifts of devotees, and made the depôt of the commerce of the Ganges. The Hindoo princes of Benares had been vassals of Delhi and

Oude, and now stood in the same relation to the Company. Hastings demanded, for three successive years, 50,000*l.* in addition to the customary tribute. Cheyte Sing, the Benares prince, offered him 20,000*l.* for himself if he would remit the demand. Hastings took the money, and long kept the secret of his having it, though he finally declared that he never meant to appropriate it. However that may be, he did not remit the demand, but raised it to 60,000*l.* as a fine for delay, and exacted it by marching troops to receive it. The money was paid, and then a body of cavalry was demanded. Hastings avowed his policy towards Cheyte Sing — to increase his demands till the prince turned restive, and then to make him pay high for pardon. Cheyte Sing offered 200,000*l.* to be received into favour; but was told that it was not enough, and that the Governor-General was coming to Benares. Hastings was meditating selling Benares by a third bargain with the Oude Nabob. At Benares he arrested the prince, and was in consequence barely saved from ending his career in the midst of one of its basest acts. His officers were killed by the enraged populace of the Brahminical city; and the whole country rose, for many miles round, at the first news of a check to the English. The prince had escaped to the opposite river bank, and was preparing to dictate terms to his oppressor, when the British troops came up, summoned by messages which Hastings

had managed to send through the enemy. The British troops conquered; Benares was annexed to the English territory. The prince fled; one of his family was made Rajah of Benares, but without power, or other wealth than his pension from the Company. The Company received nothing from the far-famed treasury of Benares. It contained only a quarter of a million, and it went to the troops as prize-money. The territory, however, yielded a revenue of 200,000*l.* a year. His treatment of Cheyte Sing formed the second article of Hastings' impeachment.

An equally bad case was his pillage of the Princesses, or Begums, of Oude. A young Nabob now ruled there. He extorted money from his wealthy mother so outrageously that she appealed to the English for protection. Hastings believed that she and the other ladies of the family were worth 3,000,000*l.* in treasure, besides palaces and other wealth. He conspired with the profligate son to charge the ladies with having instigated disturbance at the time of the Benares conflict, and to take their wealth as a fine. They were imprisoned, insulted, and subjected to hardship, and their trusted officers were tortured. Hastings extorted 1,200,000*l.* from them, and justified himself for this, as for the other deeds just related, on the ground that the people of India could be managed only by force or fraud; that it was his business to do the best he could for the

interests of the Company, and that he must be the best judge of the means. The Directors and the English Government remonstrated against his acts, and repeatedly endeavoured to remove him; but he was so stoutly and obstinately supported by the proprietary, that he set his enemies at defiance, and completed the revolutionary period of our history in India by ruling till 1785.

We shall see hereafter how British courts of law worked in a country where the morality of Western Europe and its safeguards of law must at first have been unintelligible, and afterwards unacceptable. We can now only indicate that the establishment of a Supreme Court at Calcutta was a sign and pledge of a settled organization, as the territorial arrangements of Hastings were of a permanent policy. He committed crimes, and inflicted misery, as unnecessarily (according to modern opinion) as wickedly. But, these crimes apart, he was a great benefactor to both countries by amalgamating them to a greater extent than any other man had done, or than any other could have done. He was the first Governor of India who could and did converse with any natives in their own tongue. He was the first who opened the potent and mild resources of intellectual sympathy, by cultivating and honouring Oriental literature, and interesting the best minds of Europe in the history of our native subjects in Hindostan. He made the way easier for future Governors, and

finished with his own strong hand the revolutionary period which perhaps no other could have brought to a close. It is impossible to esteem him, and it is impossible not to admire him. Without any appearance of a conscience, and with nearly as little indication of a heart, he had a most effective understanding, and deserved whatever praise can be commanded by vigorous and patient resolution, and a life of strenuous purposes carried out in unfaltering action. He could hardly have been a happy man at any time; but he was strong and collected enough to keep his foes at bay, and win a final victory over them in the form of an acquittal from charges for which he had in fact undergone a protracted punishment of disgrace and suspense. He won royal favour, and a good deal of popular admiration: was made a Privy Councillor and the idol of the street; and he died, Hastings of Daylesford. He would probably have confessed in some soft hour of sunset, under the old oaks, that he did not enjoy them so much after the heavy price he had paid for them as when, in his childhood, he dreamed of possessing them, without a thought of guilt to be risked in the acquisition of them.

CHAPTER X.

CLOSE OF THE FIRST EXPERIMENT OF GENERAL GOVERNMENT.

1785.

"This is true, that the wisdom of all these later times, in princes' affairs, is rather fine deliveries, and shiftings of dangers and mischiefs, when they are near, than solid and grounded courses to keep them aloof. But this is but to try masteries with fortune."—BACON.

AT the close of so critical a period as that of the administration of the first Governor-General, and of such a ruler as Warren Hastings, it seems fitting to take stock, as it were, of our East India possessions, to ascertain the amount and condition of what we have acquired. For this purpose we must see what has been doing to the South. The Madras Presidency had, at the time, no mind to be overlooked on account of the vast and showy achievements of Clive and Hastings in Bengal; and the spread of our empire was in fact nearly as remarkable, in the way of influence, in the south of the peninsula as it was in extent in Hindostan Proper, while there was as little to be said for the moral quality of the conquest in the one case as in the other. The grand apparent

difference in the two cases is that in the north-eastern territory two men of eminent ability did everything by their own strong will and dexterous hands, so that the spectacle presented to the natives was that of a ready-witted, resolute, irresistible Power, doing what it pleased with their country; whereas at Madras there was no overbearing genius, acting and ruling in defiance of men and circumstances, but a set of men quarrelling among themselves, and, if by chance agreeing on any policy or method, pretty sure to reverse it on receiving orders from home. Their military quality was highly esteemed; and there was an incessant competition for their alliance; but, as long as the Directors and their agents were apt to be at variance about their most important proceedings, and the chief officials were seen to be changed almost as soon as any decided policy was instituted, the general impression throughout the Deccan inevitably was that the British in India were weak and fickle, like other people, though in a less degree than the native rulers.

It will be remembered that Clive's early achievements left us with a Nabob of Arcot on our hands. The only lands held by the Company were the district round Madras, and a maritime district, the Northern Circars, which the Delhi Sovereign granted to them in 1765, and about the revenues of which they had made arrangements with the Nizam, the great Viceroy of the Deccan. More than this v

necessary to sustain such a position as theirs—that of arbiters of the destinies and relations of the native rulers; and they therefore first arranged with their Nabob that they should undertake the military defence of the Carnatic—he paying the expenses. By this means they obtained possession of all the forts; and it was resolved that whenever the Nabob desired to get rid of the garrisons he was now thankful to borrow, his wish should be resisted. The country was thickly studded with forts, perched on hill-tops, commanding difficult passes among the hills, or protecting fertile plains; and every soldier that could be spared was in one or another of them.

The vicinity of the British was dreaded by one order of the people and liked by another. The wealthier classes felt themselves reduced to the level of the multitude wherever the British administered or controlled either military or financial affairs; whereas, the lower classes were less wretched in proportion to the stability ensured by the presence of the English. As for the administration of justice, the time had not yet arrived for the introduction of English law even into the British territory on the coast, where it was hereafter to create as much disgust and bewilderment as in Bengal. Meantime, as the Hindoos predominated over the Mohammedans so as to allow few traces of Mussulman rule in the south, it was left chiefly to the Brahmins to deal with offences. Their power of excommunication was so

much more effective than any penal arrangements which could be made by Mussulman or Christian, that, whatever might be professed, the whole business of social morals and manners remained in the old hands, wherever the British appeared, as it had done wherever Aurungzebe had penetrated. Thus time passed, native rulers now combining and now making war on each other; now inviting the dreaded Mahrattas, and now seeking alliances against them; and everybody, all round, using the Mahratta name as a bugbear to frighten everybody else. The English, all the while, were under constant embarrassment as to whom they should support and whom put down; and the Directors sometimes left them without guidance, and even without answers, when they requested orders; and then confirmed or reversed their work, as might happen. The Rajah of Tanjore was deposed to please the Nabob of Arcot; and then the Directors insisted on his being reinstated. Again, the English Government sent out naval commanders to whom the Directors gave authority over their naval force in India; and this caused a perpetual struggle about precedence in dignity, and authority in political affairs. When Government sent an envoy on a mission, he required the Company's officers to appear in his train; and they found it impossible to do so before the eyes of tribes and nations who had always regarded them as supreme. An occasional rebellion of the Council

or a part of it, against a President, the recall of a popular Governor home, or the imprisonment of an unpopular one on the spot, went further than anything else probably to show the essential evils and insurmountable difficulties of a method of rule which had grown up in India out of the natural circumstances of the case. Groups of foreign traders had inevitably become a territorial and political power, apparently supreme, but soon seen to be subjects, liable to be overruled from home in matters of Indian concern. Another complication was added when the two earlier Presidencies were placed under that of Bengal, and all the local governments subordinated to a Governor-General and the decisions of a Supreme Court. Here was the Madras Governor subjected to the Governor-General; and he to the Directors; and the Directors (under certain agreements at critical seasons) to the King's Government. It was not to be expected that the watchful nabobs, far and near, and the restless Mahrattas, and the jealous French who remained in India, should be much impressed by the consistency and dignity of a method of rule so complicated, and so troubled in its working. General notices like these must suffice in regard to the state of the Madras Presidency up to the year 1778.

The French were so often found to be on good terms with the Company's enemies, and helping them in wars and revolutions, that it was determined by the Eng . to expel them from India

on the first convenient opportunity. If we got an ally to enforce our demand that French troops should be dismissed from territory which we had leased to a small chief, our ally helped us with alacrity, but only to engage the French troops in his own service. French officers organized the soldiery of any doubtful power, and were found in the heart of hostile territories and councils. When news arrived, in July, 1778, of war between France and England, the English did not wait to hear confirmation of the rumour, but disembarrassed themselves of the French at once. The settlements on the Hooghly and the Bay of Bengal surrendered on summons, and Pondicherry fell in September. The garrison were gallant soldiers, and the British were a generous foe; and every circumstance of mitigation softened the bitter mortification of vacating the place in which the French had till now been, as it were, an opposite neighbour in India to the other great European power. The garrison marched out with the honours of war, and the Pondicherry regiment was allowed to carry its colours.

There remained one foot-hold of the French—a small place on the western coast, called Mahé, where they had a factory. The spirit of Hastings showed itself in the project of marching native troops, under their European officers, across the peninsula, to take this small place, at once driving out the French altogether, testing the dispositions of

the intermediate rulers, and proving the quality of his favourite Sepoys. Hastings met with opposition from the majority of his Council; but he had not only resolved to attempt the feat, but had strong pleas to urge in its favour. The Bombay Presidency needed cheering and strengthening. Hyder Ali (whose story we must presently tell) derived so much assistance from the French that it was desirable to prevent their having a residence and storehouses in the country. The scheme becoming known, it was the best policy to execute it rapidly. So the thing was done. Hastings was proud of the march to his dying day; and the Bengal Sepoys, however changed in mood towards us, are proud of it to this hour. We have seen that mutinies have been occasioned by attempts to send Sepoys to sea. Hastings was aware that, to escape such an order, his Bengal force would willingly meet every other sort of danger. A body of nearly 7,000 Sepoys, commanded by 103 European officers, and encumbered by a body of 31,000 followers (rendered necessary by the unknown character of the country they were to traverse) was ordered to rendezvous near Cawnpore, whence it commenced its march on June 12, 1778. Hastings superseded the commander in September, appointing Lieutenant-Colonel Goddard in his stead, under whom the march was completed. On they marched, no one knowing in the morning

what scenes and people he should become acquainted with before night. Sometimes on wide hot plains, sprinkled over with mosques and saints' tombs, with their environment of dwellings: sometimes in perilous passes, with Hindoo temples half-way up the shelving rocks: sometimes overtasked to get out of the jungle before night; and then embarrassed how to cross deep gullies or broad rivers, while a multitude of inhabitants looked on uneasily, or fled, to give the alarm of invasion: now feeling as if they were leaving home for ever, because they must pass the Vindhya range; and at last, finding "the black water" on the other side their world—they must have felt what our resources of knowledge and travel hardly allow us to conceive; but they did what they undertook. European troops met them, having come round by sea; Colonel Braithwaite led them to the attack; and they took Mahé on the 19th March, 1779. It was strongly placed; but it was not stocked for a siege. The French might be very mischievous still, by assisting the plans and the warfare of our enemies; but they were dislodged from their last foot-hold. As to the Bengal Sepoys, the Governor-General said of them that they had proved "that there are no difficulties which the true spirit of military enterprise is not capable of surmounting."

At the moment when this feat was accomplished

there was severe embarrassment in the Council-chamber at Madras. Hyder Ali, the great ruler of Mysore, had just applied for assistance against the Mahrattas; and the question was what answer to give him. He appealed to a treaty of nine years' standing, by which the Madras Government was bound to alliance with him in defensive wars; but he had made the same appeal in the first year after the treaty, and had obtained nothing better than neutrality. The British were afraid to involve themselves with the Mahrattas by openly assisting Hyder, but they would do nothing against him. The same answer was given now, and bitterly did the English rue it. How came they to pledge themselves to such an alliance in mutual defence if they could not keep to it for a single year? Their excuse was that they could not help themselves, being at Hyder's mercy at the moment of negotiation. Hyder was a soldier of fortune, of the lowest birth—his great-grandfather having been a wandering dervish from the Punjaub, who begged through the country, in order to raise the means of founding a mosque in the dominions of the Nizam of the Deccan—a method by which he got money as well as reputation. His descendant Hyder grew up totally uneducated; but he was a born soldier and commander, and he lived to endanger the British empire in India more than any man, or even any hostile nation, from the hour when

they set foot in it till now. He was rendered irredeemably hard-hearted and vindictive by having been put to the torture in childhood with his brother, to extort payment for a pretended debt of their deceased father; and early humiliation aggravated his ambitious tendencies to passion. By serving his prince, the Rajah of Mysore, at a pinch, by his soldierly qualities, he obtained a military command; and having used his position for marauding purposes, he was able to make such an appearance in the field as secured further promotion. He raised a troop, and armed them from the proceeds of his plunder, and engaged French officers to drill and organise them. He engaged, also, an astute and servile Brahmin, who supplied the defects of his ignorance, and did the dirty work of his intrigues. Hyder became Commander-in-Chief of Mysore, and with the aid of his Brahmin, pillaged friend and foe by a diligent use of his authority, his force, and his opportunities. He swept off the cattle of every district he crossed, and sold them at advanced prices to their owners. The number of his wounded always appeared unaccountably large on the periodical occasions when the allowance for the wounded was to be drawn; the fact being, that he added hundreds of sound men to the body of claimants by bandaging their limbs and bodies in cloths dyed blood-colour. While he was in the field, his Brahmin was at court wheedling the weak Rajah with praises of the

Commander-in-Chief, and obtaining whatever Hyder chose to ask. When he felt himself strong enough, Hyder assumed the office of prime minister, and soon after pensioned off the Rajah, and seated himself on his throne. This took place in 1761, when Clive had just returned to England after the acquisition of Bengal, and young Warren Hastings was made a member of Council. It is hardly probable that either foresaw, when hearing of the accession of a new and warlike ruler of Mysore, that the bandit Hyder, who cut off noses and ears by hundreds in a day, and plundered every wealthy man he could hear of, would be, within ten years, not only the most embarrassing ally the English in India had ever had, but the enemy who would be very near driving them out of the country altogether.

As sovereign of Mysore, he first encroached on all his neighbours, so as to unite them all in an alliance against him; and next he took advantage of their fears to divide them, and make them fight his battles. In 1767, the Nizam, the great Prince of the Deccan, was warring against the British, instead of with them against Hyder. The English, afflicted by the weaknesses already described, had enough to do to meet the Nizam, when suddenly Hyder swept down the pass, and scoured the plains of the Carnatic, almost without drawing bridle for the last 120 miles, and appeared before Fort George, and among the residences of the English officials. The Madras Govern-

ment declared that there was no option about making a peace on the enemy's terms; and it was then and therefore that they agreed with Hyder to restore all conquests on both sides, and to aid one another against all attack from any quarter. The British treated their engagement as men too often treat "vows made in pain;" and they failed their ally in his next struggle with the Mahrattas. It suited his purposes to let them alone for the time, when he had beaten off his invaders; and he applied himself, between 1774 and 1778, in strengthening his empire. In 1778, the Mahrattas threatened him again; and again he applied to the British to fufil their agreement.

Again they shrank from giving active help; and sorely they suffered for it. The French were smarting under the humiliation of their total dislodgment, and they stimulated the passions of Hyder, and offered their services in organising his forces. They set about their work diligently; and so did Hyder in another direction. He won over not only the Nizam, but his own enemy, the Mahrattas, to an alliance against the British. The British seem to have been misled by the impunity allowed them on the former occasion of receding from their engagements; for it does not appear that they were at all prepared for the consequences of their present faithlessness, and of his wrath at their taking Mahé, after a warning from him that he considered that place in some sort

a dependency of his own, and that if it was meddled with he would invade the Carnatic. At one time the council wrote to Calcutta that affairs looked threatening; and then they informed the Directors that their prospects were pacific. They did so in January, 1780, and again in February; while, so late as the following June, no measures of defence were taken. Then, they bethought themselves of moving a detachment of soldiers across the Kistna, to be within call. It was on the 19th of June that news arrived of the assemblage of a large army under French officers at Bangalore, and of the march of Hyder from Seringapatam. Before the end of the month it was known at all the Presidencies that Hyder's army had been supplied with stores in abundance from the French islands, and that the force fell little short of 100,000 men. Then ensued that invasion of the Carnatic which is as celebrated an event as any in the history of India. The mighty host poured down from the breezy table-land of Mysore upon the hot plains of the Carnatic through the passes, and especially through that one which Sir James Mackintosh found so safe for the solitary traveller seven-and-thirty years later—as wild with rock and jungle in the one case as the other, but witnessing within one generation the modes of life which are usually seen five centuries apart. Mysore was rising under Hyder to the stage of improvement which a vigorous Mohammedan ruler can induce

upon an exhausted Hindoo state; but, under British superintendence, the best policy of Hyder had been left far behind for many years when the Recorder of Bombay made his philosophical observations on the security of life, property, and industry, on the very road by which Hyder descended to lay waste the Carnatic.

The Carnatic was indeed laid waste. Our garrisons yielded, for the most part; and the war, and its consequences of famine and disease, so depopulated the country, that, after peace was made, not one human being, nor one head of cattle, was met in a journey of hundreds of miles. The villages were burned, far on each side of the invaders' path; and Madras was so closely pressed that there was no other prospect than of yielding ultimately from famine. The British force was divided and overthrown in detail; and there appeared to be no means of meeting the great French force expected on the coast. The peasantry told Hyder everything, and the British commanders nothing; and it was the utmost that the English could do to hold their ground in a few fortified posts, without venturing upon offensive operations. Then it was that Hastings made his second memorable venture with his Bengal Sepoys. He sent down five regiments 1,100 miles along the coast to Madras, venturing to oppose them to French troops, and having cause to be proud of his venture. They returned at the end of four years

to Bengal, just before Hastings laid down his authority. He reviewed them, rewarding them with language which fired the hearts of a generation of future soldiers. As he rode along, in his civilian blue coat, and with uncovered head, every countenance of that array of black Rajpoots (for they were chiefly of that race) blazed with pride and delight; and the way in which those Sepoys were assured that they had mainly saved the southern Presidency is a tradition all over India to this day. Sir Eyre Coote, the idol of the native troops, was sent to conduct the war; and, by their attachment, rendering available his failing powers, and by the vigour of the Governor-General's absolutism over the feebleness of the Madras authorities, our empire was saved. At Porto Novo, near the old Fort St. David, which Clive knew so well, the British force was in a desperate position on the 1st of July, 1781—with the deafening surf parting them from their ships on the right hand, and Hyder's host in possession of all the sand-hills round, and of both roads in front. The occasion kindled a valour like that of Crécy; and the handful of hungry British put to flight the well-found host of the enemy, as a family of wolves scatter a herd of sheep. If the English had had cavalry, they would have destroyed Hyder's force; as it was, they dispersed it, and obtained a rich booty, with a loss of only 400 men. Still, hunger pressed throughout the province, and most where it was necessary to concentre the force.

It was no use to propose negotiation. Hyder's reply to all such overtures was that there was no negotiating with authorities who went home every two years or so, being succeeded by men who disclaimed the pledges of their predecessors. The whole affair seemed to be drawing towards the dreaded close of a surrender through famine when Hyder died before Madras. His son Tippoo was as well disposed a successor as he could have desired, though not as vigorous; but, between the shock to his army of their old leader's death, the necessity of going home to establish his authority there, and the danger of invasion on the west by a force from Bombay, Tippoo found it necessary to withdraw from the Carnatic. Hyder died in Nov., 1782; Tippoo withdrew homewards in 1783; and made peace in the spring of 1784. The basis of the treaty, after so much mischief had been done, was, as before, a mutual restitution of conquests. The next year closed the reign of the first Governor-General; and our possessions in India then stood thus. A reference to the map will show the proportion our acquisitions in 1785 bore to our dominion now. When Clive and Hastings were said, in their own time, to have given us an Indian empire, the extent of our territory was a matter of wonder and conscientious misgiving; but the great fact of the case was the establishment of a policy under which the territory, and its advantages of every kind, must grow and increase. The possessions which

Hastings left to his successor were; the whole of Bengal, with its appendages of Orissa and Bahar; and the territory of Benares, the Northern Circars, lying along the Bay of Bengal, the Guntoor Circar, separately acquired in 1778; the estate of the Company near Madras, consisting of five miles along the coast; and Nagore, acquired from the Tanjore Rajah. On the western coast, the island of Salsette had been ceded to us by the Mahrattas. The Carnatic was, in fact, our own, being held under our control by a Nabob who was a mere creature of the Company. At the close of a period so remarkable as the administration of Warren Hastings, and in prospect of further conflicts in the Deccan, a new provision of government was made, of the highest importance in the history of our empire in India. That empire was thenceforward to be ruled under the combined authority of the British Government and the East India Company.

CHAPTER XI.

BEGINNING OF THE DOUBLE GOVERNMENT.

1784—1799.

"'Tis not easy for the distant parts of a large State to combine in any plan of free government; but they easily conspire in the esteem and reverence for a single person."—HUME.

"How shall the enemy of the bride speak well of the wedding?"
Proverb.

WITHOUT departing from the plan of these chapters—that of describing the British in India, and not the fluctuations of Indian questions in Britain—it is necessary to glance homewards occasionally at those marked periods when the legislature provided for great changes to be wrought in the management of our new dependency. The last of those great changes was the institution of a Supreme Government and Judicature in 1774. The plan did not work very well, and it failed to supply some needs; so that before the first Governor-General resigned his office it was clear that further considerable changes must be made—and especially at the source of authority—in the very constitution of the governing power of India. The outcry against Hastings, which was soon to cause his impeachment, was already very loud, and the Ministry and the

India-house together could not prevail against the determination to support him on the part of the proprietors. Other causes of discontent, financial, political and moral, have been referred to before, and we can only glance at the most serious of all—the ill-success of the introduction of English law, and the establishment of the Supreme Court in Bengal. No sufficient care had been used to define the powers and duties of the executive government, on the one hand, and the judiciary on the other; and incessant strifes between the two caused a rivalship in the oppression of the natives which must be put an end to, one way or another. English law proceedings are not very delightful to us at home, among whom, and to suit whom, the whole body of British law has grown up. It could not possibly suit any other country but one inhabited by our own race; and there is no Asiatic people to whom it could be rendered intelligible, applicable, or endurable, without a training of such duration as need not be contemplated here. Every custom, feeling and prejudice of the natives was outraged by our system of oaths, examinations, scale of offences, trials, and punishments. Never, perhaps, was a man more extensively or bitterly hated than the first Chief Justice—Sir Elijah Impey, whose merits and demerits are still a matter of controversy, but who would have fared little better in such a post if he had been a just man made perfect. The confusion

and popular wretchedness in Bengal under the new system were so terrible, and the Company at home were so disappointed, and so unable to keep on good terms with the Government, that something must evidently be done; and the British people were roused to a stronger interest than the present generation has ever been seen to take in Indian politics.

In 1783, Lord North and Mr. Fox were administering affairs at home, and Hastings was intriguing in Bengal with the Nabob of Oude, with whom his famous interview was to take place in a few months. Mr. Fox proposed his scheme for the better government of India, not at all anticipating the hubbub it would occasion, nor dreaming that it would throw out the Coalition Ministry. Never before had the nation been so excited about Indian affairs, though the main objection made to the bill was founded on purely British considerations. The King was angry and alarmed to excess; and the Commons, with their considerable majority, were obliged to give way before the hostility of the Lords to the measure. These circumstances are referred to here because the impression they produced on young minds largely affected the subsequent fortunes of our Indian empire. Among the eager listeners to the debates, which were repeatedly carried on till four or five in the morning, was the young Irish peer Lord Wellesley, who had won reputation as a scholar and a poet, and who had lately taken his seat, and his place among Grattan's

party in the Irish House of Lords. He was soon to become intimate with Pitt, and in a few years more to establish a theory and practice of government in India, for which the discussions of 1783 and 1784 went some way to prepare him. We hardly need add that he had a young brother, Arthur, who was likewise to have something to do with India. He was now a boy of fifteen, fond of play, and showing a countenance so undeveloped that then, and for long after, it was said by casual observers that whatever his accomplished brother Richard might do, nothing would ever come out of Arthur. He, too, heard at school something of the uproar about Fox's India Bill, though without any suspicion how nearly the matter might concern him. Young John Malcolm, born in the same month, had already chosen India for his destination, and had just landed at Madras, and gone to the seat of war in front of Tippoo's force. Munro was in the field there, an ensign of four-and-twenty, interested in learning how the presidency was to be legislated for, of which he was to be an eminent governor. There was a French prisoner in camp about that time who probably cared little enough about how our legislature dealt with India, but who was afterwards so far interested as every European monarch must be in the management of such a dependency of any empire. A young sergeant, whose name was Bernadotte, was taken in a night attack on the British camp, and detained till the

peace in 1784. These were of the generation which connects us with that charged with the first establishment of a polity in India.

Fox's bills were thrown out, and Pitt's rival measures became law in 1784; and there was another "double government" to be discussed as the leading feature of our Indian rule. Clive's "double government" consisted of the face and its mask; Pitt's "double government" consisted of a dual brain with its pertaining pair of hands. Under Clive, the British ruled absolutely, while fulfilling the forms of vassalage to the Mogul court. Under the system of 1784, the Company and the administration prepared by consultation and a regulated co-operation or method of concession at home, for carrying on an absolute government in India. Clive's method was merely provisional, and expired when Hastings transferred the administration of Bengal from Moorshedabad to Calcutta, on the imprisonment of the native ministers. The Double Government provided in 1784 by the legislature is in operation at this day. The two methods have nothing in common but the name; but their having the same name renders this short explanation desirable.

The Company's home government consisted before of the two courts—first of Directors, and second of Proprietors. To these was now added a third body, whose office was described in part by its title—

the Board of Control—a body consisting at first of Privy Councillors, nominated by the King, to the number of six, and of the Secretaries of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer, in virtue of their office. The limitation to the Privy Council for a choice of members was removed nine years later. The President transacts the business on ordinary occasions; and his business is to superintend the political and territorial transactions of the Company (who were then less a political than a commercial body), to overlook all the correspondence on those subjects, and, if necessary, to overrule the proceedings of the Directors. As a compensation for this, the Court of Proprietors could not interfere when the Government and the Directors were agreed. The salaries and other expenses of the Board of Control were to be paid by the Company.

Such is the famous Double Government of India which all the civilized world criticises, and which stands as an anomaly in political history. Without defending it in a theoretical view, Englishmen may fairly ask men of other nations (whether republicans or subjects of a despotism) what better arrangement could have been made, under circumstances wholly unprecedented? A set of merchants found themselves involved accidentally (as may be said) in war and politics, and compelled to exercise military and political sway, while they were themselves

subjects of a remote monarchy which had no connection with India except through them. It was not the case of a colony and its mother-country; for India has never yet been colonized. It was the case of an aggregate of States, poor and misgoverned, and in such a condition of anarchy that the commercial Company was not so much tempted as compelled to overrule by its power of civilization the terrorism and corruption of native rivals and tyrants. The struggle was deepened and dignified by the intrusion of our European rivals, the French, upon the scene; and a decisive character was given to the whole by the accident of two men of eminent ability starting up in the most critical times, each in his place. Clive and Hastings bequeathed to the Company functions and liabilities which had never been contemplated or desired, and to which its members must, except by miracle, be inadequate. They must be aided by Government; bickerings must arise out of the mutual jealousies of bodies so connected; and when the political and territorial business of the Company began to outgrow the mercantile, so that the honour and the foreign relations of England became implicated with the procedure of the Company, it was necessary to impose more or less of Government control as a set-off against support and assistance afforded to a body which must otherwise have been overwhelmed by its responsibilities.

So much for the origin of the "double government" —a creation not only natural, but inevitable. Its probable working was and is quite another question. It was said from the beginning that the rule of officials who were subjects at home while sovereigns abroad could never succeed; that while the natives supposed them sovereigns, the interference of the Board of Control could ónly paralyse their actions; whereas, if the natives discovered them to be subjects, controlled even in India by a higher power, their authority would perish at once; and that, if there was any escape from this liability, it could only be by the subservience of the one board to the other. If the Directors were subjugated to the Board of Control, it would be better for all parties that the Company should be dissolved, and India be made a colony. If the Company could resist and nullify the dictation of the Government (which everybody knew to be impossible under the adversity of that time) the new institution would be simply an expensive sham. If neither could subjugate the other, they would be always quarrelling; and, as one consequence, India would be misgoverned. Such were the forebodings in 1784, when Pitt's India Bill became law; and it cannot be denied that both countries have had a taste of all the prophesied evils in turn, while yet the government of India remains one of the finest specimens—all the difficulties considered —of human government that the world has seen.

Nothing is easier than to find fault with the government of India; and it is certain that a multitude of errors have been committed, the results of which will long embarrass us; but if the singularity of the case be duly considered, its vastness, its prodigious embarrassments, and the necessarily empirical character of the methods to be employed, it may be doubted, even in this our hour of calamity, whether better success could have been obtained by our merely human understanding in our age of the world. As to the beneficent operation of our rule on the fortunes of a hundred millions of natives there can be no question. The doubt is, not of the blessing of our rule to the natives, but whether it might not have been greater to ourselves—a question with which we are not concerned in this place. After taking a survey of India, in his calm philosophical way, and from his excellent point of view at Bombay, Sir James Mackintosh spoke of the country, a dozen years after the institution of the Board of Control, as "our ill-gotten but well-governed Asiatic empire." We have since deteriorated in some respects, and improved in others; and, on the whole, we believe the description remains true.

The same authority, under the same circumstances, declared his belief that the revolutionary period of our rule had closed with Hastings, and that Lord Cornwallis's just and moderate principles and temper would stand the country in as good stead as the

ability of Hastings. This experiment was instituted in 1786, when Lord Cornwallis became the second Governor-General. He held the office seven years, during which events of eminent importance took place in the Deccan. He went out furnished with elaborate instructions from the combined authority of the Board of Control and the Company; and his rule was signalised by two classes of operations, financial and judicial.

The Nabob of Arcot, or of the Carnatic, son of our first *protégé* there, had not only failed for a course of years in his engagements to the English, made in return for their defence of his country and his rule, but had become hateful to his own subjects by the oppression exercised in raising the revenue. Who got the money nobody could or would tell; but the Nabob was poor; he did not pay his tribute to the English, nor the wages of the soldiers whose good-will was all important to the British; and yet his subjects suffered as cruelly as if always under the screw of a rapacious government. As the Nabob could not, or would not, govern properly, the British repeatedly proposed to take the charge of his financial affairs into their own hands; and Lord Cornwallis effected the transfer of the management. Every impediment was thrown in the way by the reigning family; the decline of industry and its rewards had become almost irremediable before reform was attempted: and by 1792 it had

become so questionable whether new methods were not as bad as old tyranny, that fresh arrangements were made. In the first instance the Nabob had failed to pay his 360,000*l.* a year, and Lord Cornwallis undertook the levy, altering the conditions; and in 1792 the Nabob became again liable for the same amount, under penalty, in case of failure, of forfeiting certain districts; while, in case of war with Mysore, the whole Carnatic was to come under British management, the Nabob becoming a pensionary—a better lot for him than being the helpless victim of Tippoo, as he must have been but for British protection. He was not qualified for a better destiny, and in 1801 yielded up the civil and military government of the Carnatic in exchange for one-fifth of the net revenue of his dominions, and the maintenance of his officers and court.

Out of these arrangements grew Lord Cornwallis's system of management of the land—well meant, but of questionable benefit to the people. In the other branch of his reforms, the judicial, the results were very discouraging. He received reports of the continuous increase of crime; and the characteristic vices of the natives of India, falsehood and trickery of all kinds and degrees, seemed to be aggravated by the introduction of laws and their forms which an Asiatic people were more apt to pervert than to understand. Lord Cornwallis was an honourable soldier and a benevo-

lent and earnest-minded man, but he was not wont to succeed: and as he failed at Yorktown, and thus closed the American war, and changed a ministry at home; and as he finally succumbed to disease and death on the Ganges, at a critical moment, having undertaken a second term of rule in India when he was physically unequal to the charge; so he now, in the interval between those two failures, miscarried in his statesmanship, though he brought to his work personal qualities as venerable as his chivalrous courage when his army had to lay down their arms in Virginia, and his calm dignity when he was dying in the place which should have been occupied by the most vigorous man of the time. The imperious and corrupt rule of Hastings made everybody eager to put the mild and virtuous Cornwallis in his place; but, at the end of ten years, he would have been a bold man who would assert that the people were better and happier under the one than the other. There remains, however, the grand consideration of the influence of personal character, so potent in India. Hastings had the prestige of genius; Cornwallis of probity, and, for a time, of something approaching to wisdom. But, after all, his name is most favourably connected with military achievements, and the reduction of the power of Tippoo.

After the peace in 1784, the dominions of Tippoo consisted of the high table-land in Mysore, extending

500 miles by 350. This was the stronghold of the Mohammedan power in the south; and very strong it was, with its natural defences and its forts, and a Mussulman population almost as numerous as the Hindoos. Tippoo had the command of any number of French officers and engineers, and plenty of money to pay them with, his revenue amounting to 5,000,000*l.*, in addition to the accumulations left by his father. He was desperately hated by the English from the time when the late peace disclosed what his treachery and cruelties had been towards his prisoners of war; and when the "Tiger" (which is his name translated) proved that there could be no permanent peace or prosperity for us in the Deccan while he held his lofty seat, the British rejoiced to go out against him, as if it had been a real tiger hunt. Tippoo began to arm, and prepare for a struggle when he found, in 1790, that his name was not in the list of friendly powers recorded in the British treaty with the Nizam of the Deccan; and he felt his way by attacking the Rajah of Travancore, whom we were bound by treaty to assist in such a case. The Nizam joined forces with the English; but his junction was as embarrassing as it could be useful. There was a brave and skilful body of French officers to be broken up and dispersed from the service of the Nizam, while his own fidelity was always sufficiently questionable. The dispersion of the French corps was admirably managed, without

bloodshed or even ill-will; and the gorgeous array of the Nizam's forces, with their long train of followers, was a spectacle very animating to the young Englishmen who bore a part in the pageant—some of them little dreaming what fortunes were in store for them—one as directing and controlling the policy of the Deccan from a post at Hydrabad, and another breaking the power of the Mahrattas, and a third becoming the virtual sovereign of broad provinces. On they went, and one after another of Tippoo's fortresses fell into their hands, till Tippoo bethought himself of the way in which his father had distressed the English. He descended into the Carnatic, leaving the British behind him; and once more the Mysore cavalry appeared in the neighbourhood of Madras. This brought Lord Cornwallis himself into the field, and soon after the Mahrattas joined the league against the "Tiger." Each party had successes in different directions; but when the great fortress of Bangalore fell before the British, Tippoo demanded a truce. It was refused; and then his fortunes revived a little. He held off and held out till the spring of 1792, when General Abercromby coming up, and the allied host surrounding Seringapatam, no further resistance was possible. Tippoo yielded, and accepted humiliating terms. Yet he was not crushed. Half his dominions were left him, as if to give him power of future mischief. The other half he ceded to the allies, and above 3,000,000*l.* of

treasure, and all his prisoners, and two of his sons as hostages. Men are now living who remember the interest excited by those boy princes, ten and eight years old, and the admiration called forth by Lord Cornwallis's treatment of them. Tippoo himself was deeply impressed by it. Yet was he as treacherous and vindictive as ever, while moved by the British fidelity and magnanimity. He instantly began to agitate among the princes of India against us, and sent a secret embassy to the French islands. It took years to disclose the extent of his intrigues and the depth of his hypocrisy. He could claim no sympathy, and little compassion; for he was the first aggressor, and was never ungenerously treated. He was not of any ancient race of princes, but the son of a free-booter; and he was altogether responsible for his own adversity. It was not Lord Cornwallis who disposed of him at last; for the Governor-Generalship changed hands in 1793. He returned home, and was succeeded by Sir John Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth, who in 1798 yielded his government to Lord Welles-ley (then Lord Mornington). One of the first things Lord Wellesley heard in India was that 10,000 French and 30,000 negro troops were expected in Mysore from the Mauritius. No time was to be lost. The French were carrying all before them in Egypt, and Mysore was now to be the portal through which they meant to march into India. In February, 1799, the invasion of Mysore was ordered; the allies opened

their fire against Tippoo early in March; and on the 4th of May they were in possession of Seringapatam. On the former occasion, when the troops were baulked of their plunder there, Lord Cornwallis and General Abercromby gave up to them their own share while awarding them six month's batta, in consideration of their excellent conduct. Their time was now come. Tippoo's troops fled from the breach the British were entering. He was wounded, but obstinately refused to make himself known, and was shot by an English soldier whom, in self-defence, he had wounded in the knee. He was honoured with a solemn funeral the next day; and he has been since idolised among his Mussulman subjects as a martyr to their faith. He was increasingly oppressive to his people, however, and no claims to moral respect can be advanced on his behalf. He was as remarkably fond of letters as his father was illiterate; and at the India House a portion of that library may be seen with which he was wont to delight himself for many hours of the day. The British were now rid of their greatest enemies. Hyder's age was not known; but he was above eighty when he died. Tippoo was forty-nine.

General Harris commanded the British at the storming of Seringapatam, and some remarkable youths sat on the commission appointed to divide the conquered territory. "Boy Malcolm," as he was called, was the first secretary, and Thomas Munro the second. The general in command was one of the

commissioners; and another was the British colonel who had commanded the Nizam's troops on the occasion—that young colonel bearing the name of Arthur Wellesley. The English territory now extended to the sea on the Malabar side, and on the south to Coimbatore and Tanjore. The revenue thus acquired was small—not more than half a million a year; but the British territory was rendered more defensible, and communications were established between the different portions. There was no reason for placing the family of the usurper on the throne of Mysore, while any of the hereditary sovereigns' descendants remained. One of the princes of that family was made Rajah under British protection; and the brilliant episode in the history of Mysore created by the great usurper and his son closed with the expiration of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER XII.

BEGINNING OF A REVENUE SYSTEM.

1793.

"Tell me, Sir,
Have you cast up your state, rated your lands,
And find it able to endure the change?"
Two Noble Gentlemen.

"What are these?"
"The tenants."—BEAUMONT and FLETCHER.

IT is very interesting to follow the fortunes of the British in India, as their dominion extended by war and diplomacy; and especially when they were forced into war by the aggressions of their neighbours—as in the instance of the Mysore usurpers, Hyder and Tippoo; but our real position and contemporary prospects cannot be understood without some observation of the measures introduced by Lord Cornwallis as reforms in the internal administration of the country. Those measures have affected the destinies of the native inhabitants to an incalculable extent; and they have been the subject of controversy among statesmen and economists from their first promulgation to this day. No picture of the English in India can therefore be faithful in which

features of so much importance are not sketched, however meagrely.

Horace Walpole said of Lord Cornwallis that he was "as cool as Conway, and as brave; he was indifferent to everything but being in the right; he held fame cheap, and smiled at reproach." This noble eulogium indicates the faults as well as the virtues of the statesman; for a man of such qualities could hardly have any other faults than those which were the shady side of his virtues. So it was, as every part of his eventful life proved, and especially the seven years of his rule in India. He went out with fixed ideas as to the principles and characteristics of a paternal government; and he proceeded to institute from Calcutta a system founded on those ideas. There was another great and humane man at Madras, equally devoted to the work of good government; and his aspirations took form in a scheme the exact opposite of that of Lord Cornwallis. The subsequent controversy has related to the rival schemes of Lord Cornwallis and Sir Thomas Munro. We must look at the outlines of both, as both were tried in different districts.

The revenue of the Company at that time was derived from the land to the extent of more than two-thirds, the monopolies of salt and opium supplying two-thirds of the remainder. The land tenures, and the method of drawing revenue from them, were, therefore, the first object of interest and care to a

good government. Lord Cornwallis believed that nothing could well be worse than the condition of the whole agricultural population, as he and his predecessors found it, and that his duty clearly was to remodel the whole system on incontrovertible principles. He held that a steady emanation of capital from land would sustain, and was the only means of sustaining, an upper class, by which the mass would ultimately be raised in their intellectual and material condition; that such capital would create commerce; that such commerce would create knowledge and enlightenment; and that thus the ends of good government would ultimately be answered. It should be added, in justice to him and to Sir Thomas Munro, that both anticipated with entire confidence the speedy colonisation of India as the consequence of the free trade which they supposed to be near at hand. Every assumption of new political and territorial power by the Company was, in their eyes, an outgrowing of the original commercial function, which must soon, as they calculated, be vacated altogether. The failure of that calculation explains a part of such ill-success as attended both schemes. Lord Cornwallis arrived from England full of the constitutional supposition that an industrial people had their lot in their own hands, when once they were furnished with good laws and methods. He was so far from perceiving that clear and abundant knowledge of the people to be legislated for was

requisite, that he and his helpers volunteered an explanation that they knew very little of the residents and their ways and notions, adding that the knowledge would come in time, and give the means of working the new system more and more effectually. The good-natured conceit of this notion is so like that which at once institutes and damages most philanthropic experiments, that there is no need to enlarge upon it: nor need it be added that Lord Cornwallis's view of our duty to India was that we should Europeanize it as thoroughly and rapidly as possible. India was, from the earliest times discernible by us, studded over with villages, the land being divided into minute portions, which were jointly and severally, in each village, liable for the whole rent and taxes. However long such a system might have lasted if it had been left to itself, it was thoroughly dislocated by the Mussulman intrusion. The tyranny which under Mogul rule crushed the peasantry, made the soil change hands; and in one place several holders depended on one portion, while in another several portions were in the hands of one man. Where the Mussulman had not penetrated there were complications quite as difficult to deal with. The original method seems to have everywhere sprung out of the primary necessity every community was under to defend itself against enemies, brute or human; and as it permitted no inequality of fortune, it was sure to give way in some point or another, and to lapse into

special customs quite as important in the people's eyes as any principles or laws whatever. All these facts and considerations were ignored by Lord Cornwallis in instituting his celebrated "permanent settlement."

He found ready-made to his hand a class called zemindars, who were so full of complaints, and so eager in their claims, that they formed a very prominent object in his view of Indian life. Many of these were Hindoo princes of very ancient families; and no small number boasted of having held their property since a long date before the Mogul conquest. It was natural for the British to regard the order as a sort of nobles, and for Lord Cornwallis to suppose that he had only to endow them with certain powers to obtain the upper class on which the future enlightenment and elevation of the country depended. Whereas in the parts of India which then concerned us (a limitation which must be borne in mind) the zemindars were the class responsible for the payment of the land revenue, and virtually, therefore, the masters of the cultivators and the land. The community of the villages was one of liability and not of possessions; and the zemindars were regarded practically as the landowers of society, when they were theoretically only the middlemen, whose function was to levy the revenue, and pay it over to the sovereign. This account of the zemindars should be accompanied by the warning that their precise character and function are still a matter of dispute between the

advocates of opposite systems, some considering them as genuine landowners, and others as mere officers of Government, making their own fortunes out of their office, and at the expense of the ryots or cultivators from whom they levied the revenue. What Lord Cornwallis proposed to do with them was this:

In 1793 he made proclamation of a definitive settlement of the land revenues in Bengal. The Government gave up all claim to an increased revenue in future. The zemindars were to be the proprietors of the soil, but under the restriction that they could not displace any ryot who paid the then existing amount of rent. The difference between what the zemindar received and what he paid to Government was supposed to be one-third; and he had a further means of improving his fortunes in the waste lands, which were handed over to the class as a gift. These lands amounted to at least a third of the whole area. The method of equal division was imposed as the law of inheritance. All this might look well on paper on the Governor-General's desk; but a multitude of difficulties rose up at the first hour of its enforcement. Zemindars and ryots could not agree about rent and other claims; there were endless contradictions about ownership of lands: and as soon as there were courts ready to try causes arising under the new system, the amount and hopeless intricacy of the business might have dismayed any but the stoutest heart. Opinions vary still as to the

results of the method on the whole. Where it fails, some lay the blame on Lord Wellesley's passive reception of the policy, which he did not try to amend; and it is certain that the official successors of Lord Cornwallis were too full of their wars and their diplomacy to give proper attention to a scheme which involved the vital interests of nearly the whole population. Complaints abounded, certainly; but it may be true that these complaints were a sign of reviving life, as far preferable to the previous apathy of the ryot class as the screams of a resuscitated patient under the pains of a returning circulation are better than the insensibility of a drowning man under water. On the one hand, again, the rise in the value of land, soon apparent at sales, seemed to show that the plan worked well; while, on the other, it is alleged that such rise was not only capricious where the settlement extended, but that it exactly corresponded with the increased value of the nearest lands which were not subject to the "permanent settlement." It could hardly be alleged that the lot of the ryot was improved, while the landowner could find means of involving him in difficulty, and then turning him out, in order to make way for a tenant who would pay more. In six years from the first promulgation, a former power was restored to the zemindars, on their complaint that they could not obtain payment from the ryots, and on their showing that many of them had lost their ancient estates, and been ruined. They

gained their point partly by showing that the ruined zemindars gave place to a new set of landowners more oppressive than themselves. They were allowed, as of old, to eject the ryots; and then the ryots found themselves thrown into a worse purgatory than that from which they had been ostensibly rescued. It was under this *régime* that Rammohun Roy came over, and gave us his opinion, which was that the system worked well for the Company, well for the zemindars, and most wretchedly for the ryots. Bengal paid better than Madras, which was under the other system: but then, the North-West provinces, which were not under the settlement, paid as well as Bengal. The prosperity of the zemindars was owing not only to the legitimate resources of the waste lands, but to that exaction of increased rents which it was the main object of the whole scheme to preclude. As for the depressed millions, the testimony of Rammohun Roy was very striking. He said that one might take one's stand anywhere in the country, and find that within a circle of a hundred miles there was probably not one man, outside the landholding class, who was in independent circumstances, or even in possession of the comforts of life. No doubt matters have greatly improved in the quarter of a century that has elapsed since this testimony was recorded; but the existence of so low an average of welfare in 1830 proves that Lord Cornwallis's plan was not adapted for remedying the evils inherent in

the Asiatic social system—such as we found it. Lord Wellesley, however, had no misgivings about it, but extended it to conquered and ceded provinces, till it had a very wide area for the trial of its powers.

Sir Thomas Munro's scheme, called the Ryotwar system, had its trial and its failures too. It set out from premises the very opposite of those of Lord Cornwallis. Society in India, we were told, was successful, powerful, civilized, orderly, and refined, clothed in bright shawls and fine muslins, while the Britons wore hides and painted themselves for battle; and the inhabitants of such a country, descendants of such ancestors, must know better than any upstart strangers what social methods were most suitable to their constitution and environment. The object should therefore be to make Indian society as intensely Asiatic as possible. It was not suggested that, for such an aim, the legislating and executive authority ought to be Asiatic too; but the absurdity and peril of subjecting fifty millions of people to the ideas of European closet-statesmen, who admitted their own ignorance of native history, was emphatically exhibited by the advocates of the Ryotwar system. On their part, however, they fell into the mistake of imposing a truly Asiatic repression on the industrial classes. Sir Thomas Munro swept away all intervention between the Government and the tax-payer. He demolished the intermediate function of the zemindars altogether. Every ryot was to have

his field surveyed and assessed; a deduction for errors was to be made in each group of assessments, and then he was to pay the annual rent direct to the State; that rent being fixed for ever at the amount first settled. The waste land, after being surveyed and classed, was to be taken in hand by the ryots at their own pleasure; and they were at liberty to give up any portions of their lands, after the assessment had once determined the value. This looked well at first, like the scheme it was intended to supersede; and the more because Munro proposed the most liberal terms that could be offered to the ryots. But the working was immediately encompassed with difficulties. Alarmed zemindars showed that certain fields had paid rent to their fathers, in money or in kind, for many generations; there were many cases in which the ryots were virtually tenants at will; and in such instances the plan was either oppressive or impracticable. By sweeping away the landholders, the only chance of a thinking and lettered order of society was destroyed. The plan of survey, minute and meddlesome, let loose an army of rapacious native agents upon the poor ryots, who were accustomed to suppose that nothing could be done without bribes. According to Sir Thomas Munro himself, not more than five per cent. of subordinate officials were innocent of peculation. As for the collection of the small instalments of rent (or tax, whichever it is called), it afforded more opportunity

for oppression and corruption than the power of any constitutionally intermediate body. Upon one pretence or another, the lower functionaries of the State might interfere with the ryot almost every day. Nor could the class, or any members of it, rise in fortune and independence. Where there is no middle class, or only one class, such elevation never happens. In this case the impossibility was strengthened by the remarkable arrangement that bad seasons and other accidents should make no difference in the payments. As a bad year or two might thus ruin the most thrifty and industrious cultivator, the temptation was irresistible—to live from hand to mouth, and be satisfied with what chance might send. Thus a whole series of districts sank down to the condition of the few which had before no zemindars, and which were noted for their depression. According to the accounts transmitted of the district Coimbatore, where the Ryotwar system worked best, the ryot paid, in 1828, about 1*l.* 13*s.* per annum out of a gross produce averaging 5*l.* It seems almost incredible that the cultivator should be expected to thrive on 3*l.* 7*s.* a year for himself and his family, allowing him as much cattle as he could keep in consistency with his tillage. It is not surprising that the revenue under the Ryotwar system should fall far below that raised in Bengal under the Permanent Settlement. And it is rather surprising if we do not perceive that the elevation of society in India must

depend on something else than arbitrary assortment of ranks and orders, and ingenious inventions for assigning land and collecting revenue. In as far as the people are higher and happier than under native anarchy, it is from the moral power with which we are invested in their eyes (and especially through the improvement visible in the character and conduct of our officials in India), and from the moral vitality which we are thus able to impart to them. Political systems must always be weak or useless means of social advancement till the advancement has itself proceeded a long way. Hence we may acknowledge the failure, on the whole, of both the schemes proposed for the redemption of native society, without losing hope of final success, or denying such beneficial consequences as arose from each. Under the one there was, no doubt, a considerable extension of tillage, and improved industrial animation. Under the other, the peasantry felt an immediate relief from the heavy hand of the landholder. For the rest, other influences were necessary than belong to any land revenue scheme.

The crowning glory of Lord Cornwallis's plan was supposed to be the wide diffusion of equal justice. For the first time, the peasantry saw the collectors of the revenue subject to laws which could be read to the people in a way which they could understand; and they were told that if anybody attempted to charge them more than the amount settled on the institution of the new plan, they had only to apply

to the courts to get justice. The courts were presently overwhelmed with applications, which it was found impracticable to deal with from the intricacy of claims and of the evidence brought on behalf of them. Matters were worse when the power of ejectment was restored to the zemindars against the ryots; and at the end of a few years it was evident that, whatever the law might say to it, the ryots were made to pay higher rents than the settlement authorized, and that they could not obtain justice when they appealed against the hardship.

Under the Ryotwar system there was even less chance of justice. Sir Thomas Munro believed that the old laws, as well as the old customs of the region must be adopted; and he therefore preserved, as an essential provision of the common law of India in civil matters, the Punchayet, or method of arbitration. No native, he said, would ever believe that justice could be had without resort to it. The people, however, abandoned it as soon as they perceived that courts on the European method involved less delay and expense. In three years' time, even the courts in which only native judges sat to administer European law, were resorted to in preference to the Punchayet, which might have preserved society in India (as Sir James Mackintosh declared that it did) before any European authority was established, but which was soon to be confined to those localities where the people had never seen an

Englishman, nor heard of the new plans which were on trial throughout the land. The benefits of the Ryotwar scheme, such as they were, were soon almost neutralized by the corruption of the judicial part of the plan. The collectors were found so entirely unable to levy the revenue, that it was considered necessary to make magistrates of them, and give them the control of the police. This was a return to the old grievance of the officers of Government sitting in judgment on their own acts, and employing the police to execute their own purposes. More and more power was given to the native collectors under the Madras Government, till, in a quarter of a century, they were authorized not only to impose fines but stripes. In 1826, the Directors sent over a strong protest against unchecked powers being confided to a class of men who were under constant temptation to apply them tyrannically. On the whole it is clear that benevolent and just-minded men had failed in discovering means of carrying justice within reach of the whole people. For many years the headman of the village was still the main hope of the inhabitants, and his traditional authority was worth more to them than any new judicial system; and the Brahmins and heads of castes did more to preserve order and reconcile differences in their communities than the best men who worthily placed themselves under the orders of the pure-hearted Cornwallis.

In reviewing the operation of the Permanent Settlement and the Ryotwar system, it is (as was observed before) necessary to bear in mind that complement of both schemes which was, after all, never introduced— a free trade, inducing an ample colonization of the country from Europe. When Lord Wellesley made a progress through the upper provinces, in 1801, he was delighted by the signs of improvement which were visible in such agricultural districts as were fertile enough to invite experiment. His suite had rare sport among the wild beasts which were disturbed by clearances in the jungle; and the ryots were improving their tillage in the confidence that their rent would not be immediately increased. It is true there were not a few old and opulent zemindar families, now reduced to poverty, weeping along the roadside, having lost the estates which their fathers had held for centuries. It is true these were succeeded, too often, by rapacious strangers, who used the restored powers of ejectment very harshly in regard to the ryots; but the great point seemed to be gained in the bringing new lands into cultivation. Such increased production would stimulate commerce when trade was thrown open; and commerce would bring capitalists; and the capitalists would make roads and canals, opening new markets, and, through the markets, further production still. Each village would no longer be all in all to itself— in good seasons glutted with food while poor in cloth-

ing; and in bad seasons pressed by famine because there was no access to any granaries. Each village was at all times like the hamlets of lower Bengal in a flood, cut off from access to every other, and subsisting as best it might; but the hope of the legislators of the time was that capital, industry, and commerce would unite the settlements into a prosperous community. This did not happen; and allowance must be made accordingly in estimating the Permanent Settlement. It was not till 1834 that the commercial monopoly was broken up; and it is only recently that public works of the most essential character have been even begun. If India had been freely thrown open and colonized *pari passu* with the growth of free trade opinion at home, the whole country would by this time have been so attached to English rule, and so retained on the side of peaceful industry and commerce, that the Mussulmans would not have constituted an eighth part of the population; and the Mohammedan element, whether greater or smaller, would have been powerless at this day amidst the prevalent loyalty to British supremacy. As this did not happen, we must suppose that it could not happen; but when we remember how confidently the benevolent legislators of sixty years ago expected it, and what have been the consequences of the disappointment, allowance must be made for very bitter grief, though it may be more natural than philosophical.

CHAPTER XIII.

BEGINNING OF THE SUBSIDIARY SYSTEM. THE MAHRATTA WAR.

1799—1804.

"Let them be pressed and ready to give aids and succours to their confederates, as it ever was with the Romans: insomuch as if the confederates had leagues defensive with divers other states, and, upon invasion offered, did implore their aids severally, yet the Romans would ever be the foremost."—BACON.

"From my gossip's bread a large piece for my godson."
Proverb.

AT the opening of our century, the political world were talking almost as much of Lord Wellesley's Subsidiary system and the Mahratta war as of Bonaparte and the King's illness. What was the Subsidiary system of Lord Wellesley? And whence was the Mahratta war?

We must glance at the parties concerned in both, and see what they were doing in their respective places.

Lord Wellesley was at Madras for a time, having found it necessary to be present in the Deccan during the war with Tippoo, leaving the Council at Calcutta to take care of the government there.

From day to day he was feeling very painfully the anomalous character of the British rule in India, which compelled him to exercise absolute power while subjecting him to penalties for doing it according to his own judgment. The ostensible rulers, the theoretical governors of India, were non-resident, and so far off that they could rule only by means of Viceroys; and the Viceroys must act upon their own judgment, knowing how improbable it was that their views should coincide with those of Directors sitting in London, remote from the local incidents and atmosphere by which all practical good government must always be largely influenced. Lord Wellesley had opened out his proposed course of policy in despatches from the Cape, when on his voyage out. All that he saw in India, and all that he learned from the conquest of Tippoo and Mysore confirmed his views—which were these.

The British factories had become provinces, and it was no longer a question whether the English should or could recede from their footing in India. Asiatic government was so "infernal" in its character, and the feuds of various tribes, nations, and states were so irreconcilable that the great peninsula (as large as Europe, without Russia) must have been a mere hell upon earth if our civilization and our control had been withdrawn. There we were; and there we must remain. The great question was, on what footing? Could we stand still, occupying our own

settlements, carrying on the Company's commerce, and simply maintaining the frontier? It could not be done. The French had all but established their supremacy over the great prince of the Deccan, the Nizam; so that it was by a singularly fortunate union of chance, wisdom and courage that the French force at Hydrabad had been broken up, and the officers got rid of. Every prince in India would have been suborned by the French if we had not intercepted the operation. We have seen that the move against Tippoo was only just in time. Again, the Deccan was more variously peopled than Northern India, from more remnants of an ancient order of population being visible, and the Mogul power less thoroughly pervading and established. The Mysore usurpers showed what would have been the fate of all the Hindoo inhabitants of the Deccan if the British had sat still within their own frontier, and left all other states to fight out their quarrels, and the great Hindoo population to be overrun by the Mohammedan ferocity. If the more warlike Hindoos, as the Rajpoots and the Mahrattas, should set up their front against the Mussulmans, the prospect was simply of an internecine war. Under such circumstances the British could not sit still. Should they enter on a career of conquest by arms, by which the heterogeneous multitudes of inhabitants —tens of millions of each division—should become our subjects, dependent upon us in every act, and for

every resource of their lives? Nobody desired this. The English have no taste for foreign conquest, well as they like an ever-expanding field of action and enterprise. There was not an Englishman, from the King to the "interloper," who did not regard war in India as a great evil, however justifiable or necessary it might be. What was to be done, then, if we could neither quit the country, nor sit still, nor go forward in it? This was the question which Lord Wellesley had pondered on his way to the Cape, and ever since; and out of his meditations grew his Subsidiary system. About him were collected Englishmen of very various quality. Some of the old sort were mere traders and brokers, transacting their own little tyrannies on the sly, and wishing for the good days back again when the Directors were not so particular, or so well informed, or their officials so scrupulous and severe. There were a few traitors, picking up everything that could be reported to the Directors to the disadvantage of the Governor-General. There were honourable and earnest men, who were as difficult to deal with as the bad ones, from the effect of Anglo-Indian life at that period. It has been said that every man long resident there at that time was either Brahminised or *tête-montée;* either apathetic and submissive, or vehement and self-willed; and, though this could have been only partially true, Lord Wellesley found it sufficiently

irksome to have voices always calling out to him to let things alone, or to set his foot on the necks of one hundred millions of Asiatics. Very naturally and wisely he made up his mind, and incurred the reproach of pride of opinion rather than of infirmity of purpose. Right royally determined were his views and his actions.

Looking abroad from Fort St. George, what was there to be seen? First the Carnatic, where affairs were carried on under British control, in return for the preservation of the State. The Nabob could neither take care of himself nor his subjects, and he was a willing pensioner of ours, receiving one-fifth of the state revenue, and turning over to us the charge of his ruined villages, his wasted plains, and the orphans of the peasantry swept away in Tippoo's invasions. Northwards of the Carnatic was Hydrabad, the Nizam's territory, which depended on us for its welfare almost as absolutely as the Carnatic. There sat the restless and jealous Mussulman ruler in his palace, now sending to the British Resident to say how happy he was to be rid of the domination of the military French; now bending his ear to whispers about how easy it would be to drive the English into the sea, if he would only ally himself with the French, or the Mahrattas; and then again resolving to adhere to the British, because they who could conquer Tippoo, must be the strongest force in the field. After the fall of Seringapatam, the

Nizam was pettish and sulky about his gains, which fell far short of his expectations; but the first cloud in his sky brought him penitent to the feet of the English. They refused to be implicated in his quarrels with the Mahrattas; but within his frontier they virtually ruled. The great "rolling prairies" of Hydrabad were surveyed by English officials, to whom the peasantry paid their proportion of produce, thankful to be secured from further demands; the old forts, perched on crags within the line of the Ghauts, were watched, or dismantled in case of their sending out marauders; thieves were driven out of their haunts in the ruined cities which crumbled away amidst the sandy plains; the British Resident dwelt in a palace built for him, with all the splendour of Asia, and all the comfort of Europe. Around him were miles of ruined dwellings and gardens run to waste; and under his eyes were transacted the intrigues of a court which was described at the time "as a sort of experiment to determine with how little morality men can associate together." Every day there was a murder; every week there was an intrigue. The Englishman, traversing Hydrabad on his elephant, was the conservator of society; and the British troops were the only hope of peace and safety. West of the Carnatic lay Mysore, where the British were sincerely cherished for what they had done, as well as for what they might do. They had restored the

Hindoo family of sovereigns; and the Brahmins were promoting pilgrimages to the old temples, for the encouragement of knowledge and of commerce, while the industrial orders worked cheerfully under their relief from the savage rapacity of Hyder and Tippoo. Their old minister, Poorneeah, who had used his influence for the best, was still in office and showing what he could do. In two years he made fifty bridges, seventy-four miles of canal, and 1,100 miles of excellent road. Looking down from that table-land to the west, we see Malabar, with its prodigious forests filling up the space between the Ghauts and the sea. The deeply-wooded chasms and the shelves of the precipices had many a time been sought by fugitives from the cruel Mahratta troopers who were for ever desolating the territory, north and south of Poonah. The Poonah sovereigns were still captives, and their territory was still administered by a hereditary Prime Minister, called the Peishwa, whenever the Peishwa could hold his ground against the northern Mahrattas, Scindiah and Holkar, who sometimes united against Poonah, and sometimes fought with each other on account of it. At the time when Lord Wellesley was about to inaugurate his system, the Peishwa was buried in pleasure, while agitated by apprehensions of all kinds. He dreaded dethronement by Holkar; and he was jealous of the supervision of the British. His person, swathed in white muslin, was elegant as a lady's;

the jewels he wore might almost have bought a European kingdom; his soldiery were bold, sinewy, robust and martial, compared with Indians generally, with nothing approaching to a uniform, and arms of any kind they could obtain. When the English were away the Peishwa was afraid of his soldiers, and of the news they might bring him of Holkar's approach, and of his carrying all before him; and when the English were at hand he insulted them in the rashness of fear, or broke his promises to them, as the thought of the French or of Scindiah's threats against the British crossed his mind. And again, if any British traveller told him of the goodwill of England his countenance was radiant with joy. As for Scindiah, he had usurped the portions of four princes, of whom the Peishwa was one and Holkar another. The mention of such a fact will show the state of affairs which Lord Wellesley was contemplating as well (for our purpose here) as the detailed history of each of the rival Mahratta chiefs. Then there was in the north, Oude, where no fulfilment of existing terms could be expected without an introduction of more British authority. Again, there were alarms of invasion on the side of Cabul, unless we could oppose a formidable front by means of native alliances. This much of description must suffice. It is sufficiently evident that anarchy must overrun the whole of Hindostan, unless some principle of policy were adopted, and a fitting scheme of

procedure based upon it. We see that a variety of states, some Mohammedan and some Hindoo, some ruled by ambitious and others by timid princes, some obstinate and others fickle, but all weak and ill-governed, were in fact awaiting from the British their sentence of destruction by internecine wars, or their reprieve by means of a wise British policy.

Thus it was in India. Elsewhere the Shah of Persia was watching his opportunity of pleasing France and Russia by assailing India with a force from Affghanistan. Bonaparte, who had communicated with Tippoo from Egypt, was keenly intent on every means of strengthening a policy adverse to the English, by sending clever agents to native courts; and Russia did not lose sight of her hereditary policy in regard to India, at a moment when Anglo-Indian councils were evidently troubled. In London, the great majority of the Directors disapproved of every step of Lord Wellesley's, while he was eagerly supported throughout by Mr. Pitt and Lord Sidmouth. By every mail the Governor-General received emphatic encouragement from the Cabinet, while it seemed too probable that the next would bring from the Directors an extinction of his policy. Under such circumstances what was the Subsidiary system of the Marquis Wellesley?

The first object was to enable all the states with which we h relations to keep their engage-

ments with us; and this implied at the moment excluding the French from those states, and precluding wars among the respective rulers. Such was the aim. The result was giving us virtual possession of the Carnatic, the Nizam's dominions, the Peishwa's territory, and the kingdom of Oude. Thus much was done before continual opposition from home induced Lord Wellesley first to relax in his policy, and then to leave his great scheme unfinished. If he could have foreseen how amply the India House authorities would acknowledge his merits before he died, his career would probably have been a different one in its later stages.

The method was determined by the degree of success which attended our arrangements in the Carnatic, and yet more in the Nizam's dominions. The conversion of the Nizam from a restless and dangerous neighbour into a firm ally produced a great effect throughout India, and fully justified, in the eyes of British statesmen there, an extension of the experiment. The Subsidiary system was a system of permanent treaties with the States of India, by which England was to supply a military force to each, and to control all state affairs (except such as related to the royal family) through a Resident—the expense of both these institutions being borne by the state thus assisted. Lord Wellesley's policy was to use every occasion on which we were compelled, in either prudence

or humanity, to interfere with an Indian prince, to render that state subservient to English rule, while preserving its native court, religion, and customs. By this method all violence to native feelings and habits was avoided; the sovereign remained a visible object of the ancient homage, and the name of independence remained. The thing was gone, assuredly; but no method could have preserved it amidst the corruption and humiliation in which every state was sunk; whereas destruction by war and famine was thus averted. It is enough to say in the way of comment, that India has since been repeatedly at peace from end to end, for the first time in history; that the non-Mussulman portion of the inhabitants (seven-eighths of the whole at this time) have become more and more attached to our rule; that industry, security, and comfort (backward as they still are) have advanced almost as marvellously as the expansion of our frontier; and that the revenue increased at once, in Lord Wellesley's own term, by his system and his financial reforms together, from seven to fifteen millions. Such was his Subsidiary system. Now, what and wherefore was the Mahratta war?

The Mahrattas, we have seen, were first heard of in the direction of the Nerbudda, Candeish, and (some add) Guzerat. The cause of their power in the southern regions was that their great founder,

Sevajee, received from the Rajah of Bejapore, in the time of Aurungzebe, a gift of lands in the Carnatic, with the command of 10,000 cavalry. His first use of the advantage was to seize Poonah, in the character of a Zemindary, increasing the number of his soldiers, and levying contributions over a wide circuit. His descendants were feeble as princes; but there were always chiefs ready enough to adopt a marauding life; and more and more of them were for ever issuing from mountain retreats, to lay waste the country to vast distances. The worst consequence of the establishment of such a mode of life was that there could be no end to it. The larger the predatory force grew, the more impossible it was that it could be sustained otherwise than by pillage; and so prodigious had the evil become at the end of the last century, that Indian society, when our rulers took it in hand, was of two kinds only—it was either of the Mahratta type, an exaggeration of the predatory stage of civilization, in which the rulers were freebooters, scarcely pretending to govern their subjects, and rarely seen in their own cities; or it was under the rule of princes who cared for nothing but pleasure and the means of obtaining it, being rapacious in regard to revenue, but otherwise leaving their subjects to take care of themselves. Poonah and its Peishwa afforded an example of the one *régime*, and Hydrabad, with its Nizam, of the other. When the

Subsidiary system came into action this dreary alternative was driven beyond the pale of the British influence, and something inestimably better, however imperfect still, began to grow up at once within our frontier.

In Lord Wellesley's time the Mahrattas were widely spread over the north and west of India, fighting among themselves for the state of Malwa, while the head of their governments was at Poonah. They were the floating third party which occasioned and determined alliances between any other two; and great was the profit they made by being the bugbear of all. In 1770 they were the cause of the British alliance with the Mysore Sultans. The Nizam played fast and loose with us according to the demonstrations of the Mahrattas, who were the allies of both the Nizam and the British when Tippoo was humbled by the loss of half his territories in 1789. At the next shifting of the scene the Nizam had been perilously weakened by the Mahrattas, while they, again, were apprehensive of attack from Persia and Cabul, at a time when they were at war among themselves. It was plain that no peace could be expected, nor any stability of alliance and government hoped for, while these wild chiefs held their power of annoyance, and were driven by their needs to disturb everybody within reach. This was justification enough of an undertaking by the British to check the Mahrattas; but

more was furnished by the occasion used for the purpose.

Without going into the confused history of the Mahratta succession, I may just show the complication of the case at the opening of the century. The sovereign who died in 1797 left four sons, whose territory towards the north was usurped by the great chief Scindiah, who was careful to keep up a close alliance with the Peishwa at Poonah, as the head of the whole nation. Scindiah's great rival was Holkar, whose field of action was north of the Vindhya range, in Malwa, but who came down into the Deccan in the hope of touching Scindiah in the most sensitive part, by humbling the Peishwa, the feeblest of the whole set. He marched to do this in 1801, driving the Peishwa from his capital. The deposed prince petitioned for British aid, in return for which he would become tributary to the Company. Lord Wellesley availed himself of the opportunity, and used it for comprehending in the alliance as many of the Mahratta chiefs as could be induced to join it. On their part, Holkar and Scindiah both sought the British alliance as a resource against each other. The first steps taken by the Government were to afford refuge to the Peishwa; to send an ambassador to Scindiah's court; to station a large force on the Mysore frontier, as a protection against Holkar; and to prepare the Bombay troops for any service that

might be suddenly required. These preparatory events happened in 1801 and 1802. It was on the last day of 1802 that the treaty of Bassein was signed—the instrument by which the Peishwa bound himself to perpetual alliance with the British in return for their restoring him to power. It was no slight engagement for the English to enter into; and the real enterprise was nothing less than carrying on war with France on Indian territory. Not only were the Mahratta troops organized and commanded by French officers, but so large a grant of territory on the Jumna and the Ganges had been made to one of them, M. Perron, as to constitute a French state in the heart of the northern provinces. The aggregate territory of the Mahratta chiefs extended from Delhi to the Kistna, and from the Bay of Bengal to the Gulf of Cambay; an area of 970 miles by 900, comprehending a population of 40,000,000. The Governor-General's "brother Arthur" had been for many months meditating how this war should be carried on, if it should become inevitable; and here he now won his first great fame. He set forth on his enterprise three months sooner than his own judgment would have advised, and without the protection of well-filled rivers—in March, that is, instead of June, 1803. But by his celerity he saved Poonah, which was to have been burned, according to the orders of Holkar in his retreat. The Peishwa re-entered

his capital on the 13th of May. It was presently apparent that Scindiah, Holkar, and the French, with the Bhoonsla and other second-rate Mahratta chiefs, were all in alliance against the British; and the crisis was so important that full powers of every kind were committed to General Wellesley, to save the delays and possible differences which would have arisen from references to the head-quarters of Government. At the peace of Amiens, Lord Sidmouth had negligently allowed Pondicherry to be restored to France; and there French troops were now landed, to be mustered in M. Perron's northern territory. Not a man of them, however, got beyond Pondicherry; and as soon as war with France broke out again, they were all made prisoners. Without this aid the enemy were abundantly strong. Their force consisted of 210,000 infantry and 100,000 cavalry. It was a grand occasion for our young general; and grandly he met it. He and his brother planned the campaign, and fully wrought out their work.

Four British armies were to attack the territories of the confederated princes on all sides. All the four armies were victorious, and the business was finished in five months. The Deccan force, where Wellesley was, followed Scindiah in various marches in the Nizam's dominions (the Nizam being just dead, and Hydrabad in an excitable state); and Wellesley, with only 4,500 men, came upon the enemy, 30,000

or 40,000 strong, and, not waiting for Colonel Stevenson with his larger force, won the battle of Assye, on the 23rd of September, 1803. The victory of Argaum followed, and the great fort of Gawulghur, supposed impregnable, was taken in December. The Bhoonsla first sued for peace, and Scindiah followed. Colonel Murray had humbled Scindiah's power in Guzerat, before the battle of Assye was won, the great fort of Baroach being taken on the 29th of August. The third army was under Lake, who had the same powers in Hindostan Proper that Wellesley had in the Deccan. The French fled without fighting; and M. Perron's *prestige* was gone, and the French power with it, from the moment when he placed himself and his interests under British protection, with bitter complaints of his allies. A great victory within sight of the minarets of Delhi enabled Lake to restore the deposed sovereign, Shah Aulum; and the whole Mohammedan power in India declared for allegiance to England from the moment when the Mogul Emperor was reinstated. The battles of Muttra, Agra, and finally Laswarree were won—the latter on the 1st of November. The Mahrattas, led by the French, were the most formidable foe ever encountered by us out of Europe. They had every resource of science, engineering, courage, and discipline; yet they were always beaten. At that time Lake's reputation stood as high as Wellesley's, and deservedly. Both

received the thanks of Parliament, and Lake a peerage, and Wellesley the Knighthood of the Bath. The fourth field of warfare was Cuttack, which it was indispensable to keep open for communications between Calcutta and the two southern presidencies. The French were riding in the Bay of Bengal, and a land route must be preserved. Colonel Harcourt, with a small force, worsted the light troops of the Bhoonsla on every encounter, took the city of Munickpatam, and the fortress of Barabuttee; and thus the whole province of Cuttack was ours, and the entire coast, from the Hooghly to Pondicherry. On a promontory of that coast, among the salt sands of Cuttack, stands the great pagoda of Juggernaut, a landmark to voyagers, and the centre of pilgrimage by land. The priests came to put their temple and themselves under Colonel Harcourt's care; and he accepted the charge.

It was one of the most wonderful campaigns on record. The warlike Mahratta princes were attacked on a scale worthy their martial reputation. Their enemy came upon them from a wide circumference, from the sea shore, the passes of the Ghauts, the high plains of the Deccan, the tracks of the forest, the river-fords, the salt sands of Cuttack, and the rank swamps of Bengal. The Mahrattas found themselves driven in, like wild beasts by a ring of hunters; and there was no point of the circle that they could break through. They could only submit;

and they must have felt as if the world was witnessing their submission from every ridge, from the Himalaya to Mysore, and from every spire and bastion, from Delhi to Seringapatam. Our accessions of territory were considerable; but much greater was the extension of our virtual dominion. The States, released from Mahratta tyranny, were thankful for our alliance: and even the conquered princes were in admiration at the moderation of the terms proposed. Their possessions were secured to them, on conditions which would prevent their being mischievous. They were, in fact, the vassals of the English; but they enjoyed their nominal dignities and their wealth. If their occupation was gone, that was because it was not compatible with the welfare of their neighbours. Instead of being crushed by a merciless conqueror, they were permitted to pass under the Subsidiary system of a statesman. Parliament had long before interdicted conquest in India for the sake of territory: but this case was so clearly one of war with France, on another soil, that the world could not have wondered if the Mahratta war had been considered an exception to the rule. As it was not so considered, it remains as great in its moral quality as in its military accomplishment, and its political and social results.

CHAPTER XIV.

BEGINNING OF SEPOY MUTINIES.

1763—1805.

"Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine."
SHAKSPERE.

"Foster a raven, and it will peck out your eyes."—*Proverb.*

UNDER all modifications that we have been induced to try, our Indian government has always and necessarily been grounded on a military basis. The condition and temper of our armies has always been the first consideration in discussing the state of our great dependency. The Subsidiary system was in itself an essential extension of this basis; and in consequence, the condition of the army in India became more and more interesting to the authorities at home as one state after another entered into alliance with us: and when, in 1806, and again in 1809, a rude shock was given to our confidence in our Indian

soldiery, the interest spread far down among the ranks of the general public. By the political biographies, and other records of the early years of the century, we see that our Indian Empire was generally supposed to be in imminent peril through the discontents of our forces. Present circumstances throw a strong light of illustration and interest on the incidents of the various Indian mutinies, from the enlistment of the first Sepoy to the reign of Lord Wellesley's successor, supposed at the time to be probably the last Governor-General of India.

The panic once over, statesmen began to be ashamed of it, and to see or say that there were dangers greater even than mutiny. If our soldiers had been all of one race, any extensive mutiny must have been fatal, they allowed; but our troops were of singularly various quality, even then. Not Moscow itself, on a coronation day, could show so strange an array of warriors, gathered from the diverse regions of the Russian empire, as an Indian Governor-General could parade on any occasion which might compel him to concentrate his forces. The advantage of the case was that there were always troops of one race, country, and faith, ready and eager to put down those of another, on the occurrence of rebellion. Mussulman was against Hindoo, and different Mohammedan sects and Hindoo tribes hated one another as cordially as Islam and Heathendom could hate each other. No combination of indigenous

powers, large enough to endanger the British, could ever take place; and thus, while our rule must become more essentially military with the extension of our authority, the perils of a military rule must diminish. So men said when two great mutinies were over: but few or none had a consolatory word to say while they lasted.

For nearly twenty years prior to 1766 our Sepoys were organized in bodies of 100 each, commanded by a subadar, a native officer, under the eye of European superintendents. For thirty years more the companies were formed into battalions of 1,000 men each, still under their subadars, but commanded by European officers. For four-and-twenty years more—that is, up to 1820—two battalions constituted a regiment; and at that date the battalions were reduced to 500 men each. During the earlier periods, the spirit of the Sepoys of the two oldest presidencies was that of the devoted soldiery of Clive during the siege of Arcot. They worshipped the force of character shown by the creators of their function, as appeared by their bringing their children of two or three generations to salaam before the portraits of Coote, Meadows, and their beloved "Wallis." They threw all their faculties into their profession, gloried in it, and prospered in it, so as to excite wonder in all beholders, and enthusiasm in their commanders till the changes which took place in 1796 in the constitution of regiments, and in the proportion of

Europeans to natives. In the war against Tippoo, the Sepoys undoubtedly gained much in point of discipline, by a larger intermixture of Europeans; but it seemed to take some of the heart out of them, and to lessen at once their pride and their confidence. The difficulty was already experienced which has perplexed our management of our native army at intervals ever since. When the proportion of European officers was smallest the native soldiers were on their best behaviour, and most attached to their British commanders—their pride and self-respect being engaged in their duty; but then, it is not safe to leave native soldiers so much to themselves. On the other hand, when the regiments have been most abundantly officered by the Company, they could be better looked after; but their complacency was depressed, and their attachment to their commanders visibly cooled. Such is the testimony of Sir John Malcolm, a highly qualified observer, and an eye-witness of devoted Sepoy service on the one hand, and Sepoy mutiny on the other. It was he who obtained for Cawder Beg, a native cavalry officer, the command of a body of 2,000 of the Nizam's regular horse, in the campaign of 1799, and who watched his progress, as aide-de-camp of General Campbell, during the reduction of the Ceded Districts, and as one of the most confidential of Sir Arthur Wellesley's officers in the campaign of 1803. It was Malcolm who recom-

mended a native officer to the Shah of Persia, to organize and instruct a body of Persian soldiery, and who relied on the good military conduct of our Sepoys in Georgia, where they distinguished themselves in several battles, in the service of the Shah. He saw how nobly the Sepoys fought in the tremendous conflicts of the Mahratta war, and he witnessed the two extremes of Sepoy conduct in the Vellore case in 1806, when one body murdered their officers, and another put them to death for doing it. After many years' study of the native force, Malcolm's opinion was that the changes which improved the discipline of the Sepoys by introducing more Europeans and more English discipline among them, did far more mischief than good by impairing the original spirit of military loyalty which distinguished Clive's soldiery in the first crisis of our eastern progress. Distinguished as he was for his high conservatism, there was nothing in any possible Government of India that Sir John Malcolm deprecated more earnestly than a Commander-in-Chief who should countenance martinet rule in the army, "forgetting that no perfection in appearance and discipline can make amends for the loss of the temper and attachment of the native soldiers under his command."

The Madras Sepoys hold the first rank during the early history of our Indian dominion. Those of Bombay were of a different kind, and applicable to a different service. They were recruited from all

available sources. Not only were Mussulman and Hindoo thrown together, but the Hindoos were of various countries and castes, some being scarcely superior in rank to the Pariahs on the Coromandel coast. There were a few Christians also, and many Jews; these last being found to make the very best soldiers till they grew elderly, when drink usually degraded them. One great advantage of the admixture in the Bombay force was that it was more available for foreign service than that of Madras. It was, in fact, scarcely possible for high-caste soldiers to undergo a voyage without loss of caste. A few did undertake the necessary self-denial when invited by popular officers to volunteer; but a positive order to go to sea was sure to produce mutiny. There was no such difficulty with the Bombay force, while their attachment to their commanders could not be exceeded. It was always a well-weeded force, from the circumstances of its position. Discontented recruits could always abscond into the neighbouring Mahratta territories, and those who remained were thereby proved superior to the temptation. Tippoo could never induce any of the hundreds of them whom he held prisoners to enter his service, though he offered every possible inducement, and punished them bitterly for refusal: and when at length they and the European prisoners of war were on their weary march to Madras, in order to be sent round to Bombay, some of them

nightly eluded their guards, and visited their officers (by swimming tanks or at other risks) to bring them money or food, saying that Sepoys could live upon anything, but that Englishmen needed mutton and beef. This was truly a spirit not to be trifled with. There are several instances on record of the deliberate intervention of these men to save their commanders from the certain death which they drew upon themselves. They thought all was explained, when they pleaded that officers' lives were worth more than Sepoys.

As for the Bengal native army, it originated with the few companies who attended Clive to Calcutta, in 1756. The first battalions raised in Bengal were called after the names of their commanders—each company by that of its captain; each company having its own standard of the same ground as its facings, and a device derived from its subadar, —a crescent, a sabre, &c. In 1760 the British officers in Bengal were 18 captains, 26 lieutenants, and 15 ensigns, all busy in organizing battalions, consisting each of ten companies of 100 men each. In half a century, the Bengal Native Infantry were not fewer than 60,000, commanded by 1,500 European officers. The soldiers were of the proudest classes of natives—Mohammedans and high-caste Hindoos—a large proportion of them Rajpoots, the very representatives of Hindooism—an order come up, as it were, from the depths of the past to show

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the modern world what sort of men Hindostan was once full of; a stalwart soldiery of tall stature and unmixed blood: men believing nothing, and insisting upon everything they were accustomed to; with no faith, but plenty of superstition; servile to power, and diabolically oppressive to helplessness: prone to self-torture, without any power of self-denial; bigoted to home and usages, without available affections or morality; smooth in language and manners, while brutal in grain: incapable of compassion, while disposed to good-nature; good-tempered in general, with exceptions of incomparable vindictiveness; timid for a twelvemonth, and then madly ferocious for a day, or heroically devoted for an hour; frivolous and fanatical; liars in general, and martyrs on occasion; scoundrels for the most part, and heroes by a rare transfiguration. Such were, and such are, the Rajpoots of whom our Bengal army has always been largely composed, and who have been the perplexity of plain-witted Englishmen for the hundred years just closed with the Delhi atrocities of 1857.

None but the students of Indian history are aware how common mutiny has been in all the presidencies, and especially in Bengal. After the war with the Oude Nabob, in 1763, there was an outbreak, presently retracted. In 1764, eight of the Red Battalion were blown away from guns—twenty more being sentenced to death in another form. It was on this

occasion that three grenadiers stipulated for precedence, as before related. In the very next year Clive showed extraordinary confidence in his sepoys, on occasion of the celebrated mutiny of the Bengal officers. Finding that the cashiered officers hung about the neighbourhood in a body, Clive sent a corps of Sepoys to disperse them, or bring them in prisoners. Yet were these high-caste soldiers untrustworthy when the sea was in question; for in 1782, three corps in Bengal mutinied on the first rumour of foreign service, so that it was necessary to break them up, and draft them into other battalions. One of the three corps was the "Mathews" which had won high honour during a career of twenty-six years. How well the native troops would serve in the most laborious and perilous expeditions by land is shown in the two grand marches from Bengal to the other presidencies in the time of Hastings. The Bombay march has been described before; and it has been related that 5,000 Bengal infantry, with a small force of cavalry and artillery, arrived at Madras at a most critical moment, after a march of 1,100 miles through Cuttack and the Circars. It was in that campaign that our Bengal sepoys are said to have first encountered European troops hand to hand. Excellent soldiers as the French were, they met their match in the Rajpoots, who mainly composed the Bengal force; and the traditions of the fight at Cuddalore were one of the main grounds ot

confidence in our native army when a French invasion of India by way of Cabul was afterwards expected. The Bengal Cavalry was an inconsiderable body long after the Infantry had won many honours. It was only just ready for use when the Mahratta war broke out. As it consisted mainly of Mussulmans, it rushed eagerly into the conflict with Mahrattas. Mohammedan cavalry and Rajpoot infantry won the highest reputation during the five months of the first Mahratta war; and it was they who, in the most dreary moments of toil and discomfort to which Lake's army was subjected, cheered their European officers with the words, "Keep up your hearts! We will take you safe to Agra." Lake won their attachment, and the deeds they did in his service would fill a volume. If such a volume were before us now, it would be no easy matter to believe that we can never more have a Bengal native army (and to have none at all is better than to have one that cannot be relied on); yet, during this whole period, there were occasional disclosures which made prudent men, and especially officers who knew the Sepoys best, warn their rulers and the English nation that our Indian Empire, restting on a military basis, lay under conditions of radical insecurity. In all the presidencies the fidelity of the Sepoys depended too much on personal predilection, and on hazardous chances, to be considered safe and certain, at any time and under any circum-

stances. The most startling of these disclosures took place on the 10th of July, 1806, in the Madras presidency.

The eighteen children of Tippoo—ten of whom were by this time married—lived in due state in the fortress of Vellore, 88 miles west of Madras. They had sufficient liberty to be able to surround themselves with a mob of the sort of courtiers known in India as the vilest specimens of humanity it is ever our lot to deal with. The royal family had the palace entirely to themselves. The fort was garrisoned by 1,500 native soldiers, and about 370 Europeans, living in their respective barracks. At three in the morning of that 10th of July, the sentries were bayoneted by the sepoys, and shots were fired into all the windows of the European barracks. The mutineers had possessed themselves of all the ammunition, and planted a field-piece in command of the door. Parties were detached to shoot down any officers who should attempt to leave their dwellings, and the colonel and lieutenant-colonel were thus murdered. The English families inhabiting these separate houses were presently butchered. The English privates in the barracks had no means of self-defence against the fire from without; and the few officers who got to the fort had only their bayonets. The princes' servants were seen encouraging the mutineers, and keeping up their communication with the palace; and presently the standard which bore Tippoo's

emblems was hoisted. It was pulled down as soon as British soldiers could get to the flagstaff. The mutineers parted off in search of plunder; and many waverers absconded from the scene when they found that they were under no direction. By some means or other the news reached Arcot, nine miles off, so early that a strong body of cavalry was before the Vellore fort by eight o'clock. When the guns had come up, it took only ten minutes to dispose of the mutiny; and before noon hundreds of the insurgents were slain. The villagers and the police caught most of the fugitives, and many delivered themselves up as innocent men, put to flight by the guilty: but 600 remained over for trial. There was the same difficulty in deciding what to do with them that we shall have to encounter when the time arrives for us to deal with a multitude of native soldiers who were certainly not staunch under trial, and who lie under vehement suspicion of treason; but against whom there is no proof of criminal acts, and who plead compulsion for their defection. To punish them effectively might be unjust: to turn them adrift was perilous; to restore them would be criminal lenity; to transport them would be in every way inconvenient, and in all probability unjust. Civil and military rulers differed, and the wisest men found it hard to advise. Finally, the regiments were broken up, and their numbers erased from the army list. Absent members were retained under vigilant watch;

the rest were discharged as for ever incapable of serving the Company, the officers being supported by small pensions. This decision was suspended long enough to allow the agitation to subside, and to inflict the penalty of suspense in large measure. All who were proved guilty of massacre or robbery were punished in due course.

This celebrated massacre of Vellore, in which 13 European officers and 82 privates were killed, and 91 wounded, ought never to have happened. As usual, it was seen afterwards how criminal was the carelessness, and how shocking the folly which had trifled with the most significant symptoms of what might be expected. A fakeer had promised in the bazaar the downfall of the English; and for many weeks it had been known that secret societies had been formed to bind the Sepoys in a common resistance to that petty tyranny about military dress which Sir John Malcolm was so earnest in condemning. The old turban was ordered to be exchanged for a head-covering more resembling a hat or helmet in shape. Ear-rings were to be no more seen, nor the distinctive marks of caste painted on the forehead; and a kind and degree of shaving was ordained, which no native soldier could submit to without inordinate pain of mind, and a reluctance dangerous to excite. This was quite enough to induce a suspicion that the native soldiers were to be altogether likened to the Europeans. The Court of Directors declared their

conviction that the mischief was mainly owing to the altered relation between the soldiers and their English commanders, who did not trouble themselves to acquire any language which would enable them to converse freely with their men, and keep up the intercourse in which lay the secret of Sepoy attachment. The conduct of Colonel Forbes met with no defenders. He had been told the actual facts by a faithful Sepoy, whom he delivered over to a committee of Sepoys, men involved in the plot, to be examined and dealt with. Of course, the man's testimony was declared false, and he was lodged in prison. The widest difference of opinion was about the share the missionaries had in the business. One party maintained that the missionaries had nothing to do with it, while another laid all the blame on them: and both argued as if the introduction of Christianity into India hung on the decision of the difference. It is now, we believe, undisputed that the conduct of the particular missionaries concerned was absurd from ignorance, and extremely censurable for its violent bigotry. It is undisputed that the disaffection had a religious ground. On the other hand, it is clearly perceived that the question of the introduction of Christianity into India could not possibly depend on the movements of a handful of voluntary preachers, setting up to teach on their individual responsibility, and offering a doctrine and quality of sentiment and expression in which they

would be countenanced by few religious bodies in England, and certainly not by the authorities of its National Church. The controversy was not yet about whether a Heber should go, but as to whether the fanatical ravings of self-appointed preachers would involve in their condemnation all future schemes of sending out even such as Heber. The ignorance and mischief-making of the particular missionaries were established by the publication of their own reports; the fatal effects of their proselytising efforts were exhibited but too plainly by events; but the most impressive lesson of all was that of the precarious tenure of our Indian empire, if it indeed depended on the fidelity of a soldiery so easily seduced and alienated as that of Vellore. It may be doubted whether the suspicions of fifty years ago have ever entirely died out. Natives who supposed then that wearing anything like a hat in shape would make them "hat men" (*i. e.*, Englishmen), and using a turnscrew which they thought resembled a cross would make them Christians, and that shaving and leaving off ear-rings would sever them from their native sympathies, may well be conceived to be restless and suspicious at the end of fifty years, and to have accumulated plenty of evidence of our proselytising designs in the interval. Nineteen grenadiers had been arrested in May, and sent to Madras for trial, for disorder arising out of a refusal to wear the new head-gear; and when some prudent

officers evaded the enforcement of the order, the men grew the more suspicious about the depth of the plot. Unmerciful floggings were inflicted on account of these silly turbans; and every stripe alienated a native heart. Tradition lets nothing drop among the imaginative and credulous Asiatic peoples; and, while our British public of the present generation needs to be instructed in the narrative of the Vellore massacre, every descendant of the mutineers is full of stories of signs and portents, and of deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice for an ancient faith: full also, no doubt, of impulse to mutiny again under the remembrance of that old time, and the example of the new. If the Bengal mutiny extends to Madras, there will be a grand revival of the traditions of Vellore.

The other great mutiny, that of Madras in 1809, was of a wholly different character, and one which needs no detailed notice here, however important it was in itself. It was a mutiny of European officers against the Company, the immediate cause of which was the abolition of tent contracts. Under those contracts commanding officers had supplied tents and travelling accommodation to their regiments, making considerable profits out of a transaction, the principle of which was essentially bad. A spirit of thoroughly unmilitary insubordination was shown to exist to an appalling extent; and no ruler was perhaps ever placed in more embarrassing circumstances than Sir

George Barlow, the temporary successor of Lord Wellesley. Only three years before it had become clear that our dependence on the native troops was to the last degree precarious; and now it appeared as if the very spirit of military subordination and fidelity was extinct in the Company's own officers — as far as the Madras army was concerned. The readers of the Life of Sir John Malcolm will remember the story in its minute details. It must suffice here to say, that the mischief was rather got over than cured at the time—the number of insubordinates being too great to be dealt with by the higher authorities in the way their mutiny deserved.

Between wholesale resignations and dismissals, and the imposition of a test in the form of a loyal declaration, a truce was established, which allowed agitation to come to a stop, and a means of return to the hasty and penitent—at the expense of much irritation to the feelings of the faithful and stedfast.

It would be hard to say which was the more alarming and discouraging manifestation to the Company and the Government at home, and their functionaries in India—the massacre at Vellore, or the mutiny at Madras.

CHAPTER XV.

OPENING OF THE NORTH-WEST.

1804—1809.

"Better is a handful with quietness than both the hands full, with travail and vexation of spirit."—*Ecclesiastes.*

"It is easier to build two hearths than always to keep fire on one."—*Proverb.*

"Our list of nobles next let Ami grace."—DRYDEN.

THE brilliant months of the Mahratta war were followed by anxious years of suspense about a policy. No period in our Indian history was more important than these ten years were felt to be at the time; and late events invest it with a reflex interest which would tempt me to linger over its incidents if my limits would allow. Even the slight sketch which is all that my space affords cannot but show how and why Indian events were in reality as important as anything that was happening in Europe at the same time, though the period comprehended the last war with France, extending from the close of Lord Cornwallis's negotiations at Paris, and the declaration of war with France, to the evacuation of Spain by the French.

The affairs of the period had to be transacted without the Wellesleys. The General returned to England early in 1805, and how he was engaged for ten years after, no Englishman needs to be told. The Governor-General was in a harassed state of mind for the last year of his official life, and impatient to get home, to defend himself against his accusers and explain his policy. The worst of it was that he relaxed in the application of his system during that last year. Whether outward circumstances compelled the change of policy, or whether it arose from fluctuation in his own mind, under severe trials of his firmness, he and his policy were not what they had been; and some of the consequences may perhaps be afflicting us at this day. His situation was, as was truly said at the time, "a cruel one." The financial affairs of the Company were in such a state, that the means of carrying on war did not exist; while at the same time, there was no other prospect of settling India, and procuring a durable peace, than by carrying the force of our arms somewhat further. Lord Wellesley was, therefore, checking his best negotiators and commanders in the very career in which he had started them, and accusing them of warlike propensities, while he was receiving the same reproaches from England, and irritating his devoted servants into saying that he was stultifying his whole policy by deserting it at the most critical moment. So eagerly was his resignation accepted in

England, that his successor arrived at Calcutta before he could get away—that is, in July, 1805.

His successor was evidently selected on account of his pacific tendencies; and he was bound down, by the fact of his appointment, to reverse the policy of his predecessor, in as far as it involved opposition to the native rulers. It was old Lord Cornwallis who now came out again to try to obviate war in Hindostan, after having failed in the same effort in France. He was infirm and feeble when he arrived; and he died, in the course of a progress through the northern provinces, in little more than two months from his arrival. It would seem scarcely possible to do so much mischief in so short a time as he did in that interval, with the best intentions, and in the finest spirit. The leading agents of the system of Lord Wellesley were told, in despatches full of urbanity, and in the blandest state-paper style, that they were well-qualified, he was convinced, to appreciate his predominant wish, which was to remove every impression that the British desired to exert influence in any of the native states, and to show that the entire restoration of every native power to independence was to be the policy of England henceforth. While the perplexity of Lord Wellesley's agents under such instructions was at its height, the mild and loyal-hearted old man sank into his grave on the banks of the Ganges, leaving the Mahrattas joyful in the belief that the British capacity for military rule

was exhausted, and that the choice of war or peace lay in their own hands. It cost no little blood and treasure to set them right.

The question was of the settlement of Central India. Holkar would neither be quiet himself nor let the other Mahratta chiefs keep to their terms. He had, indeed, nothing to depend on but war. In peace he could not pay his troops; and he subsisted them and himself by incursions into the territory of the Nizam, and our other allies, as much after the peace was made as before. An illegitimate son, and with the vindictive characteristics of that class of royal posterity, Holkar was the only really popular Mahratta chief. "The One-eyed," as his troops called him, was always grave, usually easy, courteous, and dignified in his manners, but occasionally savage in his wrath. At one hour he would be playing with a lapdog, and the next burning a village, with intense eagerness that no inhabitant should escape the slaughter. Sometimes he distributed vast treasures among his troops, when they had succeeded remarkably in a raid in a rich district; and presently he would be seeking the jungle, with only a handful of followers, declaring that he could carry his all on his saddle. Rich or poor, he held great sway over the mind of Scindiah and the other princes; and the most intelligent British agents said openly, at the beginning of 1804, that the peace had been made too hastily and carelessly, and that

Holkar would not only appear in the field again but would instruct Scindiah to break through the terms of the treaty. For months after, he was employing his agents in all directions to stir up revolt against the English, and ravaging the domains of their allies, while pretending to treat; till, in November, 1804, he was thoroughly beaten by General Fraser and Lord Lake, and, as they believed, annihilated as a potentate; but he took refuge with the Rajah of Bhurtpore, one of the most generously treated of our allies, who sustained Holkar till he could retrieve his fortunes, and whom we were therefore obliged to call to account and punish. This was a fair specimen case, in the eyes of the Directors, of the working of Lord Wellesley's system. They said that, however it might look on paper, the actual effect of it was that we never were, and never should be, at peace. We had undertaken to keep down a hydra; and every head we struck off was to be the last; whereas it was plain that the work would be interminable. They insisted that there should be an end to it at any cost. They desired to circumscribe, and not extend, their empire; they desired trade, and not war; in spite of their positive prohibitions, their servants were making them the masters of India; and the end could be nothing but prostration and ruin. They imparted the fact, which it always causes keen anguish to the commercial mind to admit, that the Company "was fast approaching a

state of bankruptcy," the revenues of the country having been forestalled to support its wars. No more money would or could be raised; and peace must be made on any terms. Henceforth it must be understood throughout India that the British would not interfere, more or less, with any of their neighbours, but mind their own commerce, and retrieve their own affairs.

Nothing could appear more reasonable than this view in London; and Lord Cornwallis did not scruple to engage to carry it out, unaware that when he arrived within the Mahratta range, he might find that the only way to a peace lay through war. The view in India was this. In 1803, just before the Mahratta war and peace, there were several strong states outside the British frontier, and a constant liability to war accordingly. In 1805 there was not one. The extension of the organization of alliances was nearly complete; and another effort or two would make it entire and secure, leaving nothing to be done but to keep the way open for the great natural laws of society to work in the production of industry, wealth, and civilization. If the work was stopped short of this final effort, the prospect would be fearful. Where Holkar's sword and brand had passed, the ground was like that which the demon had trodden, where no grass would evermore grow. There was a time when Candeish, for instance, was all alive with men and

their works, as may be seen by the great fortresses which tower above the jungle, and the ruins which everywhere underlie the rank vegetation of the valleys and plains: whereas now the jungle had spread to the horizon, and was swallowing up more fertile territory every year. This was because the natives would never return to places laid waste with such slaughter as Holkar inflicted. The ghosts of the murdered haunted such places, the people believed, and the lands were under a curse. As the Mahratta bands thus made a wilderness wherever they went, and could subsist only by extending the process, the alternative lay between the suppression of this marauding, and allowing it the final absorption of the whole country. The best security for the British frontier, said the Malcolms and Metcalfes, would be an outlying region of peaceful and prosperous small states, such as the Subsidiary system would always provide; whereas, if a non-intervention policy were pursued, these states would all be swallowed up successively; and when they were devoured, and the Mahrattas enriched, and we impoverished, we should have to go to war at last, under every disadvantage. In ten years, said these negotiators, the effects of such a policy would be plain enough. All that was wanted was money, with which to make an example of Holkar; and then a glorious future lay before the British in India. The needful soldiery was on the spot; the will and the right arm were

ready; the cause was good; the way was open; all that was wanted was money.

To the home authorities it seemed like mockery to say that all that was wanted was money. The treasury was empty; every loan was a failure: the Company could not fulfil their engagements to pay 500,000*l.* per annum to the public in return for their privileges, war or no war, and had not paid it for ten years past: and their revenue had been anticipated in every possible way. There was positively no money to be had. If Lord Wellesley had been in a cruel situation, Sir George Barlow's was now worse. By Lord Cornwallis's death, he was Governor-General provisionally; and with him rested the responsibility of a choice between two representations which appeared to him about equally unanswerable. His decision was to make peace on such terms as would ensure a speedy acceptance. Many years after, it was admitted by all parties that each had reason for the part taken. The Directors magnanimously gave the widest circulation in India to Lord Wellesley's despatches, when they were published thirty years afterwards; and the political negotiators of 1806 acknowledged at length that Sir G. Barlow had no choice, under the financial embarrassments of the time. But it was a season of great grief and bitterness to the English, and of mischievous triumph to their foes; and both believed that the British empire in India

could not endure long, and might be extinguished at the pleasure of the Mahrattas. At the last moment of the negotiation, Holkar tried what he could gain by delay; but a message from Lake, that if the business was not finished in three days he would cross the river, and attack the Mahratta camp, induced the freebooter to accept the restoration of his large possessions: and the treaty was ratified on the 17th of January, 1806. Both parties to the controversy had professed the same object—to afford to the natives "the inestimable gift of Great Britain to India"—freedom from broils; but the Company's political agents believed that the surest way to subject the inhabitants to interminable warfare, was to make such a peace as this with such a man as Holkar. Before the middle of February he had violated the treaty in several particulars; by the middle of March he was plundering the Sikhs; and the British negotiators were kept waiting the while, till he should choose to withdraw within his own frontier, as he had bound himself to do.

Lord Minto, late Sir Gilbert Elliot, was appointed Governor-General, and arrived in the summer of 1807. The fact of his appointment proved that he was pledged to peace and retrenchment; but he presently won the good-will and hearty allegiance of the vexed local statesmen, by showing that he meant to have his specific commands obeyed by the small surrounding states. When the petty rajahs

quarrelled, he interfered to secure the peace, giving fair notice that he should enforce his interposition by arms, if necessary. He was sufficiently hardy in his policy to improve, rather than lose, the remains of popular respect for British authority, which our recent Mahratta treaty had left us. The mere quarrels were soon settled in this way; but the cure for the devastation of banditti was yet to be found. The population to be ruled over by the Company's chief officer was now one which might well be oppressive to his imagination, and which may go far to account for the shortness of the periods of office. Hastings had been Governor-General for seven years. Lord Wellesley had ruled seven years, and was sufficiently worn at the end of six. Lord Minto ruled for six years. It was a prodigious empire already. His subjects were above 75,000,000: viz., 15,000,000 of Mussulmans, 60,000,000 of Hindoos in their varieties, and 30,000 Europeans. These numbers are mentioned here, because this is, as has been hinted, a turning point in our Indian history.

The questions of policy which I have touched upon are very interesting; but there was another incident of the period which is even more so. Glimpses were by this time opening into a new region, far beyond the ken of the earlier British visitants of this vast country. An Englishman, Leedes, had once lived at Delhi: and when Lord Minto arrived, a British Political Resident, Charles

Metcalfe, was stationed there. It was regarded as a very remote point; and the reason why any Englishman was there at all was that the puppet-king who had been restored to his ancestral throne, as the successor of Aurungzebe, was incapable of ruling his dominions. This first of the renewed series of Mogul sovereigns was blind and old, and satisfied to let the English govern in his name. He was made miserly by long previous poverty, and saved treasure, which intercepted the tyranny of his worthless successor for some time. But extremes of profligacy and cruelty were always going forward in that Delhi palace, where the king of our mutineers is now defying our authority, whether by compulsion or voluntarily. It was necessary to have a representative of British authority at Delhi, to collect the little revenue there was, to keep the machine of government going, and to curb the excesses of the court which it was thought fit to sustain. The first British visitors there little dreamed that in half a century the English cantonments would occupy a wide area, and that long rows of deeply thatched bungalows — the detached dwellings of British residents — would spread like a beautiful suburb of the latest Delhi; or that it would be there, as at a central point, that the attempt would be made to extinguish our *raj*, or dominion, under circumstances which would render Delhi a doomed city, ranking with certain other old "cities of the plain."

To them, Delhi was an out-lying station beyond the verge of British India; and when they mounted the renowned Khuttub Minar, the noblest architectural shaft in the world, and looked abroad over the undulating plain of Hindustan Proper—at one time scorched brown under the summer sun, and at another green with springing wheat, or gay with flax and poppies—they gazed wistfully northwards, hoping, in the clearest weather, to catch a sight of those wondrous peaks of the Himalaya, 200 miles off, which may be seen thence on rare occasions. All beyond their view to the north-west had been hitherto an unknown land—talked of as men talk of countries they have never seen, when there was an alarm of Zemaun Shah coming down upon the Punjaub, or of the King of the Five Rivers aiding the Mahrattas. But so far were the British from conceiving that they had any business in that region, that their best political agents argued for Lord Wellesley's settlement in its application to Central India, on the ground that the small intermediate states would thus constitute a good barrier between us and the formidable tribes of the north-west. At this period, however, the mists beyond our frontier began to rise and dissolve; and some dim disclosures were made of the high-lying territory where the tamarind and the taree-palm would not grow, and where the flowers of England, and the brilliant verdure of Ireland, and the snows and

pines of Scotland, would one day surround British dwellings, the resort of fugitives from the Delhi traitor and the Mahratta fiend of our own day.

Those who lived in the remote north-west were spoken of, even up to the end of the last century, under that spell of the marvellous which peculiarly bewitches adventurers on a foreign continent. The British in India spoke of the Sikhs and Affghans as their fathers spoke of the followers of Timour and Ghengis Khan. We have old-fashioned books which describe their soldiers as tall and ferocious, with piercing eyes, and as the sands of the sea for multitude. With the Mahratta war came the occasion of our making acquaintance with the people who are now apparently supporting us against our own Bengal army, and with the country which remains firm to our tread, while our great Bengal territory is sliding from under our feet,—to be recovered, no doubt, and chiefly by means of our vantage ground in the north-west. In the time of Hastings, the Sikhs had declined from their former power; and for many subsequent years they were played fast and loose with by the Mahrattas, like the Nizam and the Mysore Sultans, and the Nabob of Oude, and the Mogul Sovereign, and every other power within their reach; and the Sikhs were changeable accordingly in their dispositions towards the English. In 1788, they offered us their alliance; and in 1803, they fought against Lake's army at Delhi. Humbled

by the result of that war, they offered their allegiance, which was accepted; and they soon had opportunities of rendering service when detachments of British troops were hard pressed by flying bands of Mahrattas. It had been prophesied, a quarter of a century before, that the destruction of the Sikhs would be prevented in one sense, and accomplished in another, by the advent of a prince who should rise on the ruins of the whole commonwealth; and the prophecy was about to receive its accomplishment when our unhappy peace with Holkar was ratified. An able man had risen up among the Sikhs, astute, self-willed, ambitious, and wholly unscrupulous, bent on learning from the British, while pretending to hold them cheap. Some of the British saw him without knowing it, in the first instance; and, from the confidence with which the story is told, it seems probable that one or more of them recognised him afterwards in the midst of his splendour. It appears that Runjeet Singh once walked into the English camp in disguise—eager to see for himself what that soldiery was like which had conquered Holkar and Scindiah. This was the time when the Subsidiary system should have united the British and the Sikhs; but the system was in disgrace at the moment; the English frontier was not to be carried beyond the Jumna; and the small Sikh states were left in the lurch.

The Sikh chiefs had till now been a confederacy, forming a sort of rude republic such as alone is practicable in the physical force stages of society. They were now to have a King. Runjeet Singh rose to supremacy among them, and obtained Lahore in 1799, making it his capital, and reducing the strongest of the chiefs to be his feudatories, paying him homage, and supplying troops. Among them, they made spoil of Umritsir, taking it from the widow of a brother chief; and Runjeet Singh appropriated the place as a second capital. He made his profit out of the quarrels of the Affghan princes, marching westwards, and receiving homage along the banks of the Hydaspes, which showed him what hopes lay in that direction. Such enterprises were usually prefaced by a holy bath, in some sacred lake near the sources of the rivers, or some holy mere among the western mountains, or some consecrated river, precious to another faith, if not his own. In 1805, he must bathe in the Ganges at Hurdwar, where the blessed stream bursts from the Himalaya; and he thus saw how affairs were going on eastwards of the Punjaub. It was soon after necessary to decide on a policy in regard to the British and the Mahrattas; and the occasion served for making Runjeet the avowed sovereign of the Sikhs, for the purpose of founding a military monarchy. Runjeet went on somewhat too fast with this enterprise, crossing the

Sutlej rather too often to please the British, and interfering so perpetually and tyrannically with the small Sikh states as to bring the latter to the Delhi Residency with petitions for aid against him. The English could not, under the restrictions of the time, promise aid; and Runjeet sent messages that he meant no harm; so that the petitioners went home uncertain whether it would not be best to join forces with their oppressor. It was a favourable opening for French intrigue against us; and, in the fear of invasion from Affghanistan, British envoys were sent in 1808 to the courts of Cabul and Lahore. Mr. Elphinstone went to Cabul; and Charles Metcalfe, then only three-and-twenty, won great fame by his statesman-like management of Runjeet Singh, through every provocation which the levity, the insolence, and the perfidy of the rampant sovereign could inflict. A body of British troops was advanced towards the Sutlej, to support the demand that Runjeet should cease to interfere with the states beyond his river frontier; but even then he trifled and tricked, till Sir David Ochterlony issued a proclamation declaring the Cis-Sutlej states under British protection, which was to be supported by force of arms. Apprehending defection under the inducement of such promises, Runjeet hastened to secure what he had got by obtaining British sanction; and a treaty was signed in April, 1809, by which Runjeet Singh was made the ally of the English, while pre-

vented from devouring any more of his neighbours on our side of his dominions. The most remarkable fact in connection with this treaty is, that it was never broken on either side. During the thirty years of Runjeet Singh's subsequent life he was our ally; and it was only during the earlier years of this term that we had cause for any anxiety about the connection. No doubt the treaty was substantially advantageous to him; but it is also understood that much of his steadiness was owing to the deep impression he received of the superiority of the English from the qualities manifested by our young envoy. If such were our boys, what must our greybeards be, in wisdom and patience? Such was obviously the question awakened in Runjeet's mind; and it should rouse our minds to a fair appreciation, not only of individuals so distinguished as Charles Metcalfe, but of the Indian training which produced such a succession of them as the last half century has supplied.

Thus it was that before the next renewal of the Company's charter, we had seen new regions opening before us—from whence came new calls of duty, more than temptations to enterprise. Nobody wished our responsibilities to be extended; if we could have stopped at the Jumna everybody would have been glad; but we were threatened with invasion from the allied French, Russians, and Turks; and it was necessary to interpose a bulwark of states between

the Cabul frontier and our own, and to take care that those states were not weakened by wars among themselves. Our treaty with Runjeet Singh marks a period in our Indian history even more distinct and significant than the new charter of 1813.

CHAPTER XVI.

SETTLEMENT OF THE CENTRE.

1813—1819.

"Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness as pillars of smoke?"—*Song of Solomon.*

"It never troubles the wolf how many the sheep be."—VIRGIL.

IN 1808 a Committee of Parliament had inquired into the financial affairs of the East India Company, taking into consideration a petition from the Company for the repayment of a large sum owing by Government, and for a loan of like amount, on account of the pecuniary embarrassments caused by disturbances in India, and the falling off of commerce at home. The great development of our domestic cotton manufacture had so damaged the import trade of the Company that, in the main article of piece goods, the value of the importation in 1807 was only one-sixth of what it had been ten years before—less than half a million, instead of nearly three millions. In consequence of the Committee's report, one million and a half was paid over to the Company, being 300,000*l.* above what was owing from Government.

At the same date, an eminent Liverpool merchant, Mr. Wm. Rathbone, happened to be in London, where, struck by the spectacle of the Company's shipping, he inquired of a merchant at his elbow why London allowed a trade so great, and so capable of expansion, to be engrossed by a corporation. His friend gave him such illustrations of the power of the Company in London as showed that nothing could be done there to obtain a free trade. If any movement were made, it should be in the provinces; and Mr. Rathbone lost no time in stirring up Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Paisley to demand the opening of the trade. Five years of the existing charter remained, and the interval was so well improved that a considerable relaxation of the monopoly was obtained in 1813. After the 10th of April, 1814, British merchants might trade to the Company's territories, and to India generally; but the China trade was still reserved. The territorial accounts of the Company were to be henceforth kept separate from the commercial; and by this provision a test of the working of the monopoly was created, and a good preparation was made for the final extinction of the commercial function. The Directors had always acted on the assumption that the immutability of Hindoo habits would for ever confine trade within a fixed amount; and they now reasoned and pleaded accordingly. But human nature was against them; and a few years sufficed to prove

that Hindoos are so far like other people as that they will lay hold of good things when brought within their reach. Bishop Heber told us, by his journals, that he saw the natives in the interior buying English comforts and French adornments wherever they could obtain them. From the first hour of competition it was clear that the great Association which had introduced Great Britain and Hindostan to each other, and bridged over the gulf between the civilization of the one and the barbarism of the other, could not compete with the ready wit and alertness of private speculators in supplying the material wants and wishes of seventy millions of Asiatics. The Company had complained in 1808 of the decline in their imports of cotton goods. After the opening of the trade their exports of manufactured cottons dwindled to almost nothing, while private merchants were exporting those goods to the amount of a million and a half per annum, with an increase from year to year.

After the Committee of 1808, Parliament attended to the Company's affairs from session to session; and in 1810 there was a further petition for pecuniary assistance—partly on account of the great number of the Company's ships which had been taken by the enemy, or had perished at sea. A succession of loans kept the India House open till the time arrived for setting about the new charter. The Company unceasingly declared, as they doubtless

sincerely believed, that they could no more exist politically than commercially if their commerce were invaded, because their territorial revenue had never been equal to their expenses: and their sales at the India House, and remittances of goods from India and China, were their reliance for meeting their obligations in England. As they admitted that their commercial profits arose mainly from the sale of tea, that branch was preserved to them. But it was this plea of theirs which created the new arrangement about their accounts—the separation of the territorial from the commercial. Their supreme dread was of that colonization of India from Europe which had been anticipated and desired by the authors of both the systems of land revenue before described. The Company declared that such colonization would go on, surely, however slowly; and that the consequence would be an ultimate separation from Great Britain, for the same reasons which had wrought out the independence of our American colonies. This was too remote a contingency to affect the terms of a charter granted at a time when the security and development of India were a matter of urgent concern; and after 1813, any Briton might trade to India, or take up his abode there, without leave from any quarter. These particulars require notice here, not only because they are historically true, but because they are the early incidents of that transition period in the civilization of India, with which our present

misfortunes there have no doubt the most radical connection. From the moment when the trade monopoly was relaxed, however partially, the institution of railways and canals, steam-communication, the electric telegraph, and everything most confounding to Mussulman pride and Hindoo apathy, was only a question of time. It is true we were not then in possession of most of those things ourselves: but they were about to be revealed; and before, as well as after, they were known to us it was equally certain that the introduction of our arts and modes of life, belonging to a different stage of civilization, must create a revolution in an ancient polity indigenous in a remote continent; a revolution which would take form in some portentous manifestation which the Company apprehended more distinctly than they could explain. Their warning of the growth of a republican spirit in India, causing in time a coalition of all orders of inhabitants against Great Britain, under a new Declaration of Independence, looks now like a melancholy joke; and it seems strange that those who should have known India well could conceive of such a settlement of a populous Asiatic country by Englishmen as could be likened to that of our American plantations. But it should be remembered that a class who knew India even better than the Directors and Proprietors at home have shown quite as little foresight and power of interpretation of social phenomena. Hardly one in a thousand of the Company's

officers in India has at all anticipated the sort of revolution that would be induced by subjecting India to the conditions of European life in the nineteenth century. Hardly one in a hundred has seen what was going on before his eyes, or reasoned on what amused his observation or interested his understanding. The great Brahminical controversy which ran high before a mile of rail was laid—how far the merit of pilgrimages would be affected by railways, which the Brahmins knew the pilgrims would certainly avail themselves of, ought to have been as portentous to our political residents as to any Brahmin. Such suggestive phenomena have abounded for half a century past; and now that it is too late, we see very clearly what they might have taught us. It is not necessary to enlarge on this, but only to point out what the action of the opposing parties really was at a juncture which both knew to be critical. The Company resisted change, under a vague and mistaken apprehension of the consequences, and of the means of precluding them, but with a just conviction that some revolution must ensue. The free-traders failed to perceive what safeguards would be required throughout a transitional period, while rightly insisting that it was not optional with any party concerned whether there should be change or not. In new cases it is the event which discloses the political philosophy; and it is only now that we fully learn what it would have been wisest to do when the Company's monopoly was

first effectually assailed. At the time we speak of, the case of the opposing parties was that of the Spanish proverb, "Whichever way you take there is a league of bad road." The merchants saw only the good highway, and exulted; the Company fixed their gaze on the bad league, and began a new period under severe anxiety and depression.

The chief affliction was that the wars were not over in Hindostan. The Directors emphatically professed a peaceable policy still; they enjoined it upon their servants; they implored, they ordered, insisted, remonstrated; but still, every representative they sent out made war, and declared that he could not help it. At this time the Directors seem to have committed the matter into the hands of the new Viceroy, Lord Moira—for the offices of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief were united in him. His appointment was caused by political changes in England; and, between the fruitlessness of their own efforts to preclude war, and the stringent action of the Board of Control, the Directors saw nothing for it but hoping the best from the rule of an old soldier who might be more likely than a civilian to estimate the evils of perpetual conflict. Lord Minto's resignation was on the way when his successor was nominated, by order of the Prince Regent and his ministers; and Lord Moira, afterward Marquis of Hastings, arrived in Calcutta in October 1813. He had scarcely

arrived when tidings came from various quarters which acted on the old soldier as the trumpet on the warhorse. His council were of a different metal, and they had an empty treasury before their eyes, and impending calls for payment on their files; and the consequence was a fierce controversy at the Board while Lord Moira was in Calcutta, and in the form of documentary recrimination afterwards. But the power passed over into the Governor-General's hands when he began to show that he could save money and generate revenue, as well as defend his territory and his neighbours. When his nine years' term of office closed, he was almost equally estimated by all parties. His military successes were brilliant, and his territorial policy was large and generous, while his social administration was prudent and gentle. It seems to be generally agreed that it was in his time that our Anglo-Indian reputation reached its highest point, and justified the best hopes.

First, there was war with Nepaul; and, as it was an affair of prime necessity, the Burmese who troubled our eastern frontier were kept quiet provisionally, till they could be properly attended to. The Goorkhas, who domineered over the chief part of Nepaul, and were delighted with a frontier which cut deep into our territory and that of states protected by us, had made irruptions which were not to be forgiven; and in Lord Minto's time a force

had been sent against them which met with signal discomfiture, on repeated occasions, before Lord Moira's arrival. Charles Metcalfe, looking on from Delhi, had strong convictions on two points at least, and ventured to lay them before the Governor-General within a month after his arrival. He was persuaded that no good could come of a war with mountaineers among the spurs of the Himalaya while Central India remained unsettled, and all alive with unscrupulous enemies and treacherous allies. And, again, he was confident that our very footing in India was imperilled by the rash practice of attempting to take fortresses without breaching—the cause of our disasters in the Nepaul war. The grand fault of the British in India, said this high-hearted young man, was, despising their enemies; and, unless they could be cured of this folly, the whole course of their Indian experience would be a group of calamities at intervals, always retrieved, as far as reputation went, by valour and endurance, but each time lessening the superstitious reverence of the natives, and finally causing our complete overthrow and expulsión. Lord Moira was struck, as he well might be, by such a despatch (worded with all due modesty) from a young civilian, and summoned Metcalfe to his presence, and followed his advice. After the loss of lives which could be ill spared, the fortress of Kalunga was at length bombarded and taken; and travellers at

this day can only know by local tradition where it stood.

By the wisest men the Goorkhas were pronounced the most formidable enemies we had yet encountered in India. They would require our best available strength to reduce them; and yet, as Metcalfe said, there was Runjeet Singh watching from the north-west how we got on, in order to decide whether he should adhere to our alliance or not: there was Meer Khan, the prince of bandits, and a vulgar and ferocious copy of Holkar, hovering about in the Rohilla country, and ready at any moment for a swoop on Delhi or Agra; there were Scindiah and the Rajah of Nagpore laying their heads together about the best time for attacking our long frontier, from Agra to Cuttack and the Bay of Bengal; and there were the Pindarrees, the vultures sure to come clustering wherever we left a heap of dead: all these must be not so much met on the frontier as kept on the other side of it by the *éclat* of our expeditions against the Goorkhas; and thus far we had sunk in their estimation. It was the most critical moment of our Indian empire. This is often said, in every empire; but it was so firmly believed in Hindostan at the beginning of 1815, that proposals were made to summon all the troops that could be spared from the two southern Presidencies, and from all our colonies, and from England—where, however, all our disposable force was soon to be otherwise occupied, between Napo-

leon's return from Elba and his humiliation at Waterloo. The Goorkhas were conquered, with much loss to us, and little glory, and by means of our artillery and money. They lost the territory between the Sutlej and the Gogra, which it had taken them thirty years to acquire; and the whole circle of watchers were asking, as we were of each other, how our empire was to be preserved, if the defence of one section of our frontier cost us so dear. The doubt was soon put to rest by the issue of the Pindarree war; and the truth was, we could hardly encounter such difficulty anywhere else as among the intricate defiles of Nepaul, held by an enemy as brave, skilful, systematic, and confident as ourselves, and far more prudent. Our superiority in guns and money gave us the advantage; but the impression left by the Nepaul war was that the Goorkhas had better be our allies than our enemies. It is well for us now that they still are so, and that Nepaul is a friendly territory. Some of our countrywomen and civilians have found refuge there this summer, and write warmly of the kindness of their reception. Our Goorkha soldiers appear to be our best reliance, till European reinforcements can arrive; and, but for a fatal infirmity of purpose at head-quarters, a force already on the march from Katmandu would have saved Cawnpore and relieved Lucknow, and more or less checked the whole mutiny. The territory acquired in 1815 gave us a

standpoint on the Himalaya, and strengthened our hold on the great plains below, while curbing the feuds of the hill tribes, and opening ways for commerce into the heart of the mountain region.

Then there were the Pindarrees to be dealt with. They were not a race, or a tribe, or a sect, but an agglomeration of lawless men of all faiths, and all ways of living and thinking that were compatible with horsemanship and marauding. Any man who could ride and levy plunder might be a Pindarree. For a century they were heard of only as freebooters; but fifty years ago they were strong enough to be treated with by the Mahratta chiefs, and to give the name of a war to our conflict with them. The Mahrattas would not eat with them, nor allow them to be seated in their presence; but they gave them tracts of land, or a license to seize them for themselves: and thus they rose in the world, though the plunder of portable goods was their chief resource. As they began to convert their adventurers and their lands into a sort of state, they occasionally fought against the Mahrattas, and were bid for as auxiliaries and when once their posts of command were recognised as hereditary, a confederation of chiefs became possible and convenient to themselves, and extremely annoying to every other power. Their confederacy sucked in all the loose elements of society: every villain who was tolerated nowhere else could always go to the Pindarrees; and wherever they went

they ruined men enough to increase their numbers by leaving no other alternative than to starve. Their numbers were never even to be guessed at, nor their visitations to be anticipated. Two or three hundred of them, well mounted, and carrying nothing but breadcakes for themselves and a feed or two for their horses, struck across country for their destination, riding faster than the news could be sent. They at length extended their line so as to enclose and sweep clear a certain area, burning whatever they could not carry away, and torturing their victims in indescribable ways and degrees, and then turned back the way they came, meeting a body of supporters who helped them to carry their booty, and to fight their way, if opposed. But they usually got off before the alarm had spread. Meeting and dispersing like the birds of the air, they presented no point of effectual attack; and the most successful conflict with them was a mere shooting of single specimens, whose place was sure to be immediately supplied. In Lord Minto's time they had become strong enough to collect annually, to the number of 15,000, for a raid; generally into the British, or some allied territory. While the English were engaged in the north before the stockades of the Goorkhas, in October, 1815, eight thousand Pindarrees crossed the Nerbudda, and, dividing into two parties, swept the entire territory of the Nizam, meeting on the banks of the Kistna. How much further they meant

to go there is no saying; but the river was still swollen, and they must turn elsewhere. They turned east and swept round by the coast, and along the Godavery, carrying an enormous booty, and having met with no check except in one night attack near the outset. This feat was planned by the ablest leader they had ever had—Cheetoo, whose name had been more or less formidable for ten years; and he sent out a second expedition of 14,000 horsemen as soon as the first had returned. No wisdom or valour availed against them, for they could never be caught, though the smoke of fifty-four burning villages went up in one day, and seventy in another. In May, 1816, they were at Cheetoo's head-quarters again, with a second vast booty, having signalized their twelve days' visit to the Company's territories by plundering 339 villages, killing 182 persons by deliberate cruelties, wounding 505, and putting to the torture no less than 3,603. Lord Moira was well aware that the Peishwa, Scindiah, and other Mahratta chiefs, were cognisant of all this, and that they were intending to invade our territories in concert with the Pindarrees, while the British forces were engaged with the Goorkhas. Our peace with Nepaul baffled this calculation, and Lord Moira at once resolved to turn his army, before it was dispersed, against this infamous coalition. The moment he received the necessary sanction from home, the attack began; but all the successes that

were won by vigilance and valour seemed to do no good, and the Pindarrees made a wider sweep that year than ever. Sooner or later, they were sure to be weakened by divisions; and this happened in 1817, when they were also alarmed by a series of bad omens. Nothing discouraged them so much, however, as a thorough defeat of the Holkar Mahrattas, accomplished by Sir John Malcolm and Sir Thomas Hislop, on clear evidence of the treachery of the Mahrattas. This battle of Maheidpore (in Malwa) took place in December, 1817; and it yielded great booty of elephants and camels, in the first instance, and then a very advantageous peace. After various shufflings on the one side, and punishments inflicted on the other, the Mahratta territory was put under British protection—several strong places being ceded in perpetuity to the protectors. Scindiah saw his own interest, and was at last convinced that it would be wise to keep to his engagements.

The Pindarrees must now take care of themselves; and their weakness was soon evident. Pressed hard by British detachments, Cheetoo could not get to his home among the hills; nor could the different Pindarree bands achieve a junction with him. He appeared in various unexpected places, at great distances; but these flights cost him all his baggage, and most of his horses. In January, 1818, his lair discovered, and the hill tribes of Malwa were

set upon his traces. They destroyed almost everything and everybody belonging to him: but they could not catch him. Two hundred followers shared his hardships and escapes; and they repeatedly advised him to surrender to the British: but he was persuaded he should be sent out of the country, and he preferred death in any form. During his snatches of sleep he was continually dreaming of that fate, murmuring "The black sea! O! the black sea!" Even now, he got away again into the Deccan, and was at large for another year, losing some of his followers at every step, but being sheltered by some Mahratta officer or other. He passed the rainy season among the Mahadeo mountains, and then endeavoured to take refuge, in February, 1819, in Scindiah's fortress of Asseerghur, which had sheltered him before. He was refused admittance, and turned his horse's head towards the neighbouring jungle. Some days after, his well-known horse was seen grazing near the verge of the forest, saddled and bridled, and carrying a bag of cash, seal rings, and letters from a deposed rajah, promising great things to the wandering robber. After a little search, some clothes were found, and then some bones, and at last a human head, which was recognised as Cheetoo's. The human tiger had succumbed to his brute brother. The last of the Pindarrees met with a singularly appropriate death.

I have given a somewhat disproportionate space

to the Pindarree war, because it is desirable at the present time to mark the characteristics of warfare with different tribes or orders of men in India, in order to see in what direction we ought to look for friends or foes; and because the incidents of Mahratta and Pindarree warfare may lessen our amazement, though not our horror, at the worst incidents of the existing rebellion. They show us what the wild Asiatic nature is. The Pindarrees were regarded as a sort of scavengers to the Mahrattas; but they were simply a gross specimen of the same type: and there is so strong a likeness between both and the slaughterers of our countrymen and countrywomen in India, that we may take to ourselves the shame of having ever allowed them the opportunity they have abused. Nana Sahib himself is the representative Mahratta chief of our time; and he is Cheetoo, dressed in the accomplishments and manners of the Europeanized native prince. We shall call up no more Pindarrees from their graves in the jungle to keep our arsenals, hold our strong places, and guard our women and children. It was madness ever to do it.

CHAPTER XVII.

OPENING OF THE SOUTH-EAST.

1619—1854.

"He sees such a desperate rapaciousness prevail; such a disregard to equity, such contempt of order, such stupid blindness to future consequences, as must immediately have the most tragical conclusion, and must terminate in destruction to the greater number."—HUME.

"If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest."—*Proverbs* xxix. 9.

FOR every summons to attend to affairs at or beyond one frontier in India, we may confidently reckon on a challenge from the opposite boundary. We have been glancing up towards the north-west, where the Five Rivers converge in the mighty Indus, which can be reached by us only over a sandy desert. While our Indian statesmen were discussing the question, as a matter of political speculation, whether it would be best to have that sandy desert or those rivers for our final frontier, or even the mountain range beyond both, it became necessary to look in the opposite direction, and see what was to be done where the other great river, the

Burrampooter (the son of Brahma) divided our territories from the Burman empire on the east. This prodigious stream involved no interests of ours for the first two-thirds of its course. It rises due north of Allahabad—the length of Oude, the width of Nepaul, and the loftiest mass of the Himalayas lying between. It skirts the Himalayan range on the Thibetan side, flowing eastwards as if it meant to cut China in two, and escape into the Pacific; but at the end of the Himalayan range, it turns their base, flows south-west through Assam, and, having received the contents of sixty rivers in Assam alone, takes a southern course, along what was our Bengal frontier at the time we are contemplating. A troublesome frontier it was sure to be, considering its own character, and that of the people who lived beyond it. As a river it is good for neither one thing nor another. It is nowhere fordable, and it is not navigable. It is equally impracticable where it is one mile wide and where it is six—when it is lowest, when it is fullest, and at all intervening times. In the dry season most of the canals into which it is divided by islands in its broadest parts are mere mud, with channels of great depth between; and in spring, when swollen by melted snows, it is a truly fearful object —slab with mud, while rolling a dirty foam on shore, and tossing on its waves trees of the largest size, and corpses of men and beasts, swept down by the inundations above, in which nearly the whole of

Assam occasionally lies under water. Day by day it makes and destroys mud banks and sandy shoals, so that any navigable use of it would be impossible if vessels could encounter the snags, sawyers, and floating forest trees, with which those of the Mississippi are not comparable. Some Hindoos treat it as a sacred river, but only those who cannot get to the Ganges. The two rivers communicate by several small channels; and when they pour out their contents into the Bay of Bengal, their mouths are separated only by islands. A territory subject to two such streams can be nothing but an area of swampy islands, in which the higher specimens of the human race cannot live; and of all frontiers none are so productive of mischief as those which are the resort only of degraded or lawless men, who go there to snatch what they can get from the *débris* of Nature, and the leavings of the brutes which make their homes in such places. In those jungly swamps, and the reeking forests which grow above them, the alligators pursue men, and men hunt the tiger and circumvent the elephant. Their mutual needs caused some little commerce to pass between the people of the confronting provinces. The eastern people wanted salt from the bay; and the Bengal folk drew some of their supplies of cotton, silk, and rice from Assam. They were rivals in the matter of ivory and gold-dust, which last they fished from the rivers. All were

sunk in the depths of superstition—the Assam people professing Hindooism, though eating animal food with their rice; not beef, but snakes, rats, ants, and grasshoppers, with dogs for an occasional delicacy. As for the southern part of our frontier, there were endless troubles at the time we are now concerned with between the people of Chittagong and Arracan—subjects respectively of the Company and the Burman empire. They were for ever at feud—proud Mussulmans having succeeded to the Buddhists in Chittagong, and the people of Arracan being no more disposed to defer to the subjects of the Company than other Burmese. The passes from the one to the other were mere tracks cut in the forest, which were overgrown after every monsoon; and trespasses, depredations, and skirmishes were for ever going on. As no Europeans could live in such places as the jungles and forests were then, the natural process was to leave matters pretty much to themselves; and then followed the inevitable claims generated by such a method. Each party of skirmishers claimed as a frontier the furthest point reached, and usually a good deal more. The Burmese sovereigns, for instance, sent word from time to time that they must have the whole region as far as the Ganges, including Moorshedabad. Many disputes arose out of their demands that fugitives of intermediate races should be delivered up to them, while, on the other hand, the subjects of the Com-

pany had no peace on account of the incursions of their Burmese neighbours.

Those who denounce all the Burmese wars that we have been engaged in are probably unaware of the difficulties caused by such a frontier as the one just described, where barbaric races live on either side, and where the necessary military force cannot be stationed on account of a climate fatal to the soldiers while endurable by the enemy. When to all this is added the usual series of provocations which the British in India have had to undergo; the intrigues of our European rivals among our neighbours, and the efforts of those neighbours to draw the subjects and the allies of the Company into treason and disaffection, it may be less wonderful than it appears at first sight that we should have had wars with Burmah, ending at length in the annexation of Pegu. It might seem at first sight very strange that we should have submitted to any intercourse with the Kings of Ava which could involve humiliation, trouble, or cost, or have burdened ourselves at last with a territory which lies beyond our natural boundaries, and was not particularly tempting, in any view; but it alters the case not a little to find that the French were once paramount at the Burmese, as they were at the Persian court—endeavouring to induce the sovereign, in each case, to promote the invasion of India through his dominions; and when it is

understood that spies were again and again traversing the Company's dominions, on a pretended mission in search of religious books, but in reality to treat with the Mahrattas, the Mogul sovereign, and Runjeet Singh at Lahore, about the expulsion of the British, our transactions with the Burmese court and people are seen to involve more than treaties and quarrels with a barbaric neighbour. Common sense might suggest that Englishmen would be hardly likely to put up with all the trouble that we have had with the Burmese, and to go into a war with them, at least without some reason—and some other reason than conquest; for it is evident that if conquest had been the object, it might have been achieved at a very early date. What the story really was may be in a manner conveyed by a very brief sketch of our relations with Burmah.

There was a king in Ava, in 1619, who encouraged the English to trade in Pegu; but the Dutch slipped into our shoes; and it was near the close of the century when our first diplomatic intercourse took place with the Burmah court. Our envoy, Mr. Fleetwood, went through the customary humiliations and provocations, made the prostrations and received the insults which were a matter of course at the Asiatic courts, and obtained leave to build a factory at Syriam, but none of the more important objects of his mission. Now and then opportunities arose for our doing and obtaining good,

when the kings of that peninsula went to war; but no adequate attention was given to them at the time, and we remained unknown to the Burmese sovereign, as regards our national character, during a long course of years which might have been improved to the advantage of our commerce and our reputation. One king slapped his thigh in the ambassador's presence, and made his courtiers laugh at the idea of the East India Company being of any use to such a great man as he was; another would not write a letter, but only an order, to the Governor-General, because he issued nothing but commands to anybody on earth; and this one sent, in return for the Company's fine presents, twenty-four heads of Indian corn, eighteen oranges, and five cucumbers. The Company's flag was, on this occasion, planted at Bassein, to the firing of guns; but the treaty which authorized it was presently found to be a mere pretence for getting hold of bribes. Within two years—that is, in 1759—all the European gentlemen at the station were murdered by an incursion of armed Burmese, just as they had assembled at a dinner-party; and only a midshipman escaped to his ship. The king fancied that the English had been corresponding with one of his enemies, and connived at the act of which some French adventurers had the credit. Our mission to the successor of this king, Alompra, failed, and we gave up the Bassein settlement, having thenceforth a walled factory at Rangoon,

within which our flag was kept flying; and for five-and-thirty years the Company's traders carried on some commerce, under hard conditions of insult, delay, and heavy duties. While they were treated no worse, and perhaps rather better than other merchants, they could put up with the airs of a pagan king who knew no better. Next began the frontier difficulties. The native inhabitants of Arracan, driven desperate by the oppression of their Burmese conquerors, became a jungle banditti: and when they had committed any extraordinary act of daring or plunder, they hid themselves in Chittagong, which had been the Company's territory since 1760. The first the English heard of it was that five thousand Burmese troops had been marched into Chittagong to apprehend the fugitive Mughs, while 20,000 more were on the Arracan frontier. They were met by a force, under General Erskine, which impressed them with some respect; they withdrew from our soil, the commander visited the British general, and, on our side, the fugitives, being tried and found guilty, were surrendered. Thus far, the matter seemed to end well: but the incident fixed the attention of the French on that region; and M. Suffrein's maps and plans were attended to at Paris, and his opinion quoted that "Pegu was the country through which the English might be attacked in India with most advantage." One consequence of this new light was the establishment of a permanent Resident at

Rangoon in 1796 for the purpose of protecting British interests and watching French intrigue. From this date there were rival embassies at the Burmese court; and the Kings of Ava became more insolent, as they imagined themselves holding the balance between two European nations. These incidents occurred when Mr. Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth, was Governor-General; and he sent Captain Symes on a mission which was more intolerable than any former one, because the King concluded, from the surrender of the Mugh robbers, that the English were too weak to keep them. It is needless to describe these embassies—the gilt boats, golden umbrellas, arrogance, and grossness on the one side; and the evils suffered on the other—the waiting hours, days, and weeks for notice; the being quartered in the street, or on the place of execution; the being paraded through the low parts of the town, for the amusement of the rabble, or landed to spend the night on an island swarming with snakes and mosquitoes; the having the shoes pulled off at the outer gate of the palace, and the hat snatched from the head under a tropical sun. All this may be imagined as inflicted on a succession of envoys, and endured, of course, only for some very strong reasons. Lord Wellesley tried, in 1802, what a little splendour would do, and sent an escort of 100 Sepoys, and a handsome equipment, with his envoy; but this was a game at which the gilt gingerbread King of Ava

was sure to beat us; and he misinterpreted the whole affair from having just been informed that the new peace at Amiens was a boon granted by France to the English, on condition of the latter restoring all places in India which had ever been French. The disarming of the British escort was actually ordered, and prevented only by the interposition of the heir apparent, who, however, could not prevent the French envoys being quartered next door to the English Colonel Symes—these envoys being a French felon, just escaped from Calcutta gaol, an American supercargo, and two half-caste youths, born in Ava. Thus matters went on, the kings telling all the world that the Company had paid homage to the golden feet, and besought the protection of Burmah, and kindly assuring a Governor-General from time to time, that if he had only applied in the right quarter, the armies of Burmah would have gone overland, and given the whole continent of France to England; whereas, if any measures were taken without leave from Ava, the King would be obliged to go overland, and take England. One viceroy at Rangoon, who had been civil to our envoy, was to be crucified in seven fathoms water, and so floated to Calcutta, to show us the consequence of our making friends among the King's servants. In a fit of caprice, however, the culprit was not only spared but promoted. In 1811 there was a second invasion of Chittagong: and the

king's object for several months was to get possession of Captain Canning, our envoy, and his suite, as hostages for the delivery of more of the Mugh fugitives. Not succeeding in this, and hearing a vivid description of two of our vessels of war which were off Rangoon, the king lowered his commercial duties, and sent messengers to Calcutta, to ask for the surrender of his enemies. An unfortunate concession was made on this occasion by the Supreme Government, which proposed (in consideration of the unhealthy nature of the service) that the Burmese troops should be admitted into Chittagong, to search for the fugitive Mughs. A demand was instantly made, in the form of a stipulation, that the British should be at the cost of the troops while so employed; and it was announced that the King of Ava had lent troops to the English on their petition. When the Mughs finally succumbed, after the death of their last king, their chiefs surrendered to the Supreme Government as prisoners of war; and when Lord Moira conclusively declined to deliver them up, it was hoped that the troubles with the Burmese were over with the extinction of the Mughs; but the King of Ava only betook himself to other schemes. It was then, in 1816, that discoveries were made of his intrigues at Lahore, and tamperings with several of the states, for the purpose of occasioning a general revolt against the English rule. The Mahrattas were the great hope of the traitor-king; but they

were destroyed before he could mature his plans. Runjeet Singh was doubtless too sagacious to be deceived as to which was the stronger power. Before giving up for that time, the King of Ava made one more effort. By deputy he wrote to Lord Moira to demand the cession of Chittagong and Ramoo, Dacca and Moorshedabad, under penalty of annihilation from his wrath. Lord Moira replied through the Viceroy of Pegu, regretting that the King of Ava should be no better supplied with advisers, and hoping that the writer of so insolent a letter would be chastised. Then followed a war of succession in Assam, and conflicts which left no chance of tranquillity to our frontier, where villages were sacked and burned, while no further apology could be obtained than that it was by mistake. Again, our elephant hunters were seized, and a Burmese army of 18,000 men, under the king's best general, announced an intention of following the Assam refugees into our territory. This was in 1822. It was clearly high time to strengthen our frontier; and the more speedily because the Assam princes had lost their game, and their country became a province of the Burman empire.

There was no respite from the provocations of our neighbour. In 1823, leave was asked for the Burmese army, with all its prisoners, to go home through Chittagong. This was refused. Next, Chittagong was encroached upon, and our island of Shapouree

was claimed, and after various refusals seized in the night of September 24, 1823. A thousand men made the attack, giving out that an army of 15,000 men was in Arracan, and that sixty boats were about to convey it into Chittagong. Three Sepoys were killed, and three wounded; and it may be regarded as a proof of great forbearance that the Governor-General wrote to the King of Ava before proceeding to repel the invasion by force. No answer was sent, otherwise than by an order to the Governor of Arracan to keep down the English, and hold the island. The Burmese obeyed these orders, and set up forts on our territories, secured by strong palisades, from which a British officer was driven back with loss in February, 1824. There was no avoiding war after this.

Nobody but the King of Ava could doubt about the issue of such a war, as far as the quality of the combatants was concerned. But the real and formidable enemy of the British was the climate. Rangoon yielded at once; the authorities fled at the first shot, and the entire population, except one hundred persons, made off into the jungle. The jungle was the mischief. The natives threw up stockades wherever they rested; and fever and sunstroke decimated the invaders. The Burmese died fastest, by many to one; they left their ammunition behind them; they laid waste their fields, and were evidently going to perdition as fast as possible; but then, the English were suffering in their proportion, and while they sent home assurances that

the Burmese were perishing, there were no signs of peace being any nearer. At the end of 1824, there was no peace. In the autumn of 1825 there was still no peace, though Sir Archibald Campbell had a series of successes to report; but there was now a good deal of talk about it. Then the English defeated the great Burmese army, ten times as many as themselves, and peace was reported to have followed, as it ought. The treaty was actually signed; but one day it became known that it had never been forwarded to the King. He could certainly never pay for the expenses of the war; and his servants hoped to persuade the General to take rice instead of money, and to cut down and carry away any trees he pleased. After the next victory at Melloone, the treaty, which had been again signed, was found in the minister's house, still unseen by the King. In February, 1826, the thing was really done. The expenses of the war were paid by the Burmese, and the provinces of Tarvi and Tenasserim were ceded to the Company, as well as those of Assam and Arracan, by which it was hoped that the quiet of our frontier was secured.

The King of Ava was afterwards declared insane, and succeeded by his brother, who might as well have been insane, too, for any benefit which we could obtain from his abilities. One of the terms of the peace was that a commercial treaty should be formed; and as soon as the treaty was ratified, Mr. Crawford's well known mission to Ava took place. The nego-

tiation lasted from Sept., 1826, to Jan., 1827, and it was conducted very much as former conferences had been, ending in the yielding up of some of the most important points on the British side, and in our being unable to obtain any fulfilment of those which remained; while, to crown the discomfiture of the official representative, who had suffered under all manner of neglect and insults, the treaty was called by the Burmese a royal license granted to the English.

In December, 1829, the British in Moulmein were attacked from Martaban. After fair warning, which produced no effect, a detachment of our soldiers was sent to Martaban to seize the offenders, when some native followers fired the place. This act, wholly unintentional on the part of the English, produced a wonderful effect; and no more molestation was offered to the British in that region for a course of years.

In the north, however, there were troubles which rendered the cession of Cachar necessary to the integrity of our frontier; and when our Affghanistan war was impending, King Tharawaddy drew his rabble rout of an army forward, ready to enter Bengal when the British should have, as he supposed, turned their backs. Except on their own territory, with its swamps and forests, and hideous malaria, there was nothing for us to fear from them. But it became necessary once more to encounter them

there. Our merchants at Rangoon declared in 1851 that they must leave the country if they were not protected from the exactions, and the oppression, even amounting to torture, inflicted by the local authorities. The treaty had been clearly and grossly violated, and reparation was demanded at the court of Ava. It was the old story over again, except that some civil promises were made at first. Then there were insults; and Rangoon was declared in a state of blockade. Next, the British ship was fired upon, and the cannonade was returned. Our readers will remember the sequel; the capture of the town, from the coast up the river; the arrival at Prome; the visit of Lord Dalhousie to Rangoon, in the hope of expediting matters and getting our troops out of the swamps before disease had carried them all off; the driving out of the Burmese from Pegu, and the annexation of the whole province, "in compensation for the past, and for better security for the future." The Governor-General's proclamation disclaimed all intention of interfering further with Burmese territory, as long as the King of Ava should respect the quiet of his neighbours. For some months there was trouble with some predatory bands of Burmese; and the King refused to exchange any further instrument of agreement: but he verbally acknowledged the cession of territory, and engaged to protect Europeans from the attacks of his subjects, and to leave the river

Irrawaddy open for free commerce between the people of both countries.

This is a painful and tedious story; but it must be told, not only because it is the true history of the extension of our empire eastwards, but because it cannot but remind those who accuse the English of territorial rapacity that it is as well to understand the facts before lavishing imputations of that sort. Whether it was possible to obtain peace and a quiet frontier by another method may be a fair subject of controversy: but we cannot imagine that any unprejudiced person could, after learning the facts, declare that this case bears any resemblance to others in which the first move has been made by the ultimate conquerors. The method of more than one of the world's rulers is to introduce discontents among neighbours, to stir up strife, to interpose, to protect, and, finally, to annex. That it was not so with Burmah, our narrative shows. Whether the English could or should have been more patient, more forbearing, more prudent, or in any way more wise, men will judge for themselves: but that the annexation of the provinces beyond the Bay of Bengal was an act of rapacity, no fair-minded observer will ever say.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEGINNING OF COMPREHENSIVE DOMESTIC AMELIORATION.

1823—1835.

"There forth issued from under the altar smoke
A dreadful fiend."—SPENSER.

"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."
TENNYSON.

AFTER long waiting, and many discouragements, the time at length arrived when wars ceased within the peninsula of India, and the energies of its rulers could be devoted to the improvement of the condition of the inhabitants, and the retrieval of the affairs of the Company. There was war in Burmah, as has been seen; but long before Lord Moira's (henceforth to be called Lord Hastings) term of office was over there was such a state of peace from the Himalaya to Ceylon as enabled him to give the crowning grace to his administration by instituting social reforms as important as his military successes were brilliant, and his political scheme definite and successful. The system which was conceived by Clive, professed by Warren Hastings, thoroughly wrought out and largely applied

by Lord Wellesley, so as to be fairly called his own, and reversed for a time by Lord Cornwallis and Sir George Barlow, under orders from Leadenhall-street, was accomplished and firmly established by the Marquis of Hastings. British authority was supreme in India: and not only had it no antagonist for a long course of years, but it availed to prevent warfare among the states of the great peninsula. Reforms, political, social and moral, at once ensued; and they were vigorously continued through three viceregal terms. They may be most clearly apprehended by being surveyed as the harvest of twenty years of peaceful administration, beginning with the close of Lord Hastings' wars, and ending with the resignation of Lord William Bentinck in 1835.

Lord Hastings left the Company's revenue increased by 6,000,000*l.* a year; and a considerable part of the increase was from the land, indicating the improved condition of the people who held it. He was succeeded by Lord Amherst, to whom the post was offered on account of the qualities for public service which he had manifested in his embassy to China. In the interval between the departure of the one and the arrival of the other Governor-General—that is, from January to August, 1823—the authority was wielded by Mr. Adam, the senior member of Council, whose short administration was made memorable by his action against the press in India, to which he believed that Lord

Hastings had given a liberty inconsistent with the preservation of social tranquillity, in a community so anomalous as that of India. He also broke the bondage of the Nizam to the great house of Palmer and Co., for the sake of English honour and the independence of our subsidiary ally. It was done by an advance of money, to enable the Nizam to redeem a tribute for which he had come under obligation to the firm, and by forbidding any further pecuniary transactions between the great firm and the Court of Hydrabad. The interest of the public debt was reduced from 6 to 5 per cent. by Mr. Adam; and he intended to apply the savings from the diminished expenditure to social objects, and especially to the promotion of native education, under the terms of the last charter; but in this he was thwarted by prohibitions from home. After having incurred as much blame and praise as could well be earned in seven months, Mr. Adam made way for—not Mr. Canning, as had been intended, but—Lord Amherst, and died on his way home in 1825.

Lord Amherst had the Burmese war to manage, in the first instance; and the Mahratta and Pindarree wars had left behind them the difficulty dreaded by every pacific Governor-General—an unsettled and unorganized population of soldiers, whom it was scarcely possible to deal with so as to satisfy at once themselves and their neighbours. The reforms already conceived, and even begun, had

not yet checked abuses, or remedied grievances; and there were real causes of disaffection, in the new provinces especially, which gave a most mischievous power to a marauding soldiery at the moment of finding its occupation gone. A vigorous rule was therefore necessary, and almost as much military demonstration as in warlike times. The improved revenue did not meet these calls, and much less the cost of the Burmese war; and a new loan and an increased taxation marked the close of Lord Amherst's term. He left the territory in a peaceable state, with not a single fort standing out, as Bhurtpore long did, against British authority, while the Company's territories were largely increased by the Burmese forfeitures. He won not a little European popularity by ascertaining the fate of the expedition of La Perouse, which had been as much a mystery as that of our Franklin expedition ever was; and he came home in 1828 full of confidence that the reforms inaugurated by his predecessor, and promoted by himself, would retrieve all financial difficulties, if they were but duly taken in hand by his successor. For such an object, the very best choice was made. If our *raj* were really over, as the deluded Sepoys now suppose, and the last Briton were to leave India for ever, tradition would preserve the memory of Lord William Bentinck, in the gratitude of the native population for centuries to come, though he overruled whatever was intolerably mischievous in their notions

and practices as fearlessly as he rebuked any self-seeking and pride on the part of all the Europeans in the country. He had given abundant proof of his ability to oppose native prejudice when Governor of the Madras Presidency, in 1805, when he supported the military commander in outraging the feelings of the Sepoys by changes in their dress—a mistake which he expiated by the immediate loss of his post. He was recalled after the Vellore mutiny; and his appointment to the highest office in India, in 1828, showed the confidence of the authorities at home that his fearlessness as a reformer would not again be spoiled by the inconsiderate rashness which they had rebuked in his earlier days. Every advantage was given to his plan of reforms by the appointment of new governors to all the presidencies at once—Sir John Malcolm going to Bombay, and the Hon. Mr. Lushington to Madras, when Lord William Bentinck assumed his post at Calcutta.

The first impression from Lord W. Bentinck's action was, that his sensibility to unpopularity had by no means increased since he was in India before. He had to carry out into practice various measures already devised and proposed, and to which he therefore pledged himself by accepting office. The most unpopular of these related to a method of retrenchment of military allowances, which excited a fierce outcry from the European officers, and remonstrances which were rebuked from home as approaching too

nearly to insubordination. The truth is the officers were poor, and could ill bear any reduction of allowances which they had learned to consider in the light of regular pay: while the Company was yet poorer; being deep in debt, and under the obligation to retrench in all directions. The Governor-General was in this case the medium through which the communications were sent. On the one hand, he would have been glad if the officers could have been spared the hardship, while on the other, he saw that no retrenchment would ever be accomplished if suggestions were accepted from the parties to be affected by it. Our elderly generation must well remember how large a space in our newspapers was occupied with the tiresome controversy about whole batta, half batta, and other technical matters, from which we gathered only that the Company chose to diminish certain privileges and allowances to their military officers, on the establishment of peace; whereas the officers said they could not live on their pay without those additions. The Duke of Wellington, then in the ministry, supported the Company's authority; and a saving of something less than 20,000*l.* a year was effected. The retrenchments were carried out in the civil departments also, committees of inquiry being employed for several years in seeing how expenditure could be checked. The outcry might have been less passionate if the salaries of civil functionaries of high rank had been reduced in any fair

proportion to those of the humbler military offices. Two millions a year were needed to meet the Company's existing obligations in England. Half a million was saved in the civil, and a million in the military department — not immediately, but prospectively. More income must be obtained by increased production, after economy had done its utmost. Several of the best men in India—among whom was Metcalfe—testified that the plainest and shortest way of obtaining a revenue was to develop the resources of the country by the utmost freedom of trade and colonization; while others—among whom was Malcolm—preferred debt and difficulty to any experiment which should throw open the country to European residents, by whom (they took for granted) the natives would be oppressed and insulted, so that the English would be driven from the country. The events of the day spare the necessity of rebuke or reply. There is probably not an educated man in England who has not been recently revolving the difference between the present state of Bengal and what it would have been if a thorough commercial understanding had been established between the industrial classes of England and Hindostan; and, as for political philosophers, they had warning half a century ago from Sir James Mackintosh, who made no secret of his anticipations from what he saw on the spot. Three years after the Vellore mutiny, he declared his opinion that mutiny was not our greatest danger

in India, but the inevitable results of commercial monopoly. He relied on the diversity of the peoples and the soldiery to control mutiny, but saw that the country could never flourish, to the point of safety, till industry and its rewards were left free. The consolation of the case was, that no false theory could for ever keep down a country so favoured by nature, and that retrieval would always be possible, and certainly speedy at last.*

The Indian government had a strong lesson in the matter of their opium traffic. Various methods of restriction on the growth and sale of opium in Hindostan Proper, where the poppy flourishes most, had been tried; and all were intolerable to the landowners and cultivators, and worse than useless to the Company, as they resulted merely in a vast system of smuggling. The opium was conveyed to Kurrachee, and thence to foreign settlements on the coast, whence it was sent to Europe under the Portuguese flag, and sold in the Company's markets. To put an end to spying the land and fighting on the roads—scenes as disgusting as were ever caused by our excise and customs tyranny in England—it was proposed to let the poppy fields and opium sales entirely alone, only requiring the seller to provide himself with a license which would cost less than the expenses and risks of smuggling. Lord W.

* Memoirs of Sir James Mackintosh (1st edition), Vol. I. pp. 385–386.

Bentinck adopted this suggestion, and carried it out. The first year, licenses were taken out for less than 1,000 chests; the next year for 7,156 chests; and the amount paid for licenses has increased beyond expectation. If the monopoly was to continue, this was probably the least injurious form it could take.

For ten years before Lord William Bentinck went out there had been discussions and experiments about the landed settlements. Throughout wide regions the zemindars were bankrupt, almost to a man: this was the complaint in one direction. Elsewhere, the cultivators were groaning under the exactions of a new set of landowners. The local agents declared that the quantity of land withdrawn from taxation by forged documents pretending old assignments was beyond belief; and Government had occasion to know, by the state of the revenue, that some trickery of the kind must be going forward. The home authorities ordered the fluctuating system to be adopted in territories pledged to the permanent system; the new North-West Provinces were to be brought under the one system or the other; the Collectors were or were not to have judicial and executive powers in regard to civil and criminal suits; all was in confusion even when Lord Moira went out. He assembled the Collectors in his first journey up the country, and determined on a new survey and assessment, seeing

at once that the ryotwar system could not answer over the wide area of Upper India, and concluding the old village system to be the best, if the derangements of recent years could be rectified, and the injured parties reinstated. Hence arose the Mofussil or Provincial Commission, appointed to work in the country, and the Sudder Commission, seated at Calcutta, to receive and adjudicate upon their reports. Great benefits accrued from these proceedings: and the rural inhabitants had begun to confide in the protection of Government before Lord W. Bentinck's entrance upon office. In the Ceded Districts, and in various parts of the Madras Presidency, there were struggles for the establishment of one or another system, or for modifications of either, too frequent and too complicated to be followed here. It must suffice that a very extensive inquiry had produced a mass of materials for new rules and methods of administration. In the Bombay Presidency especially there was scarcely a field anywhere in the territories acquired from the Mahrattas which was not measured and valued soon after its acquisition. Lord W. Bentinck soon found the necessity of establishing a settled revenue system in the North-West Provinces, to quiet the minds of the population, and encourage their industry; and in January, 1833, he met the chief officers at Allahabad, and presently after sanctioned a scheme by which the villages were surveyed and assessed

by European officers, and the minor divisions confided to native officers, whose decisions were subject to the native method of arbitration. The assessment thus procured was finally settled for a term of thirty years. Speedy judicial decisions and publicity of accounts were provided for; and the people immediately began to rejoice in their security, and the certainty of their circumstances for at least thirty years. It would be very interesting to look closer into the peasant and village life of Hindostan, as laid open by the materials thus collected; but our space is too small for even the barest record of the other acts of the new Governor-General.

In consequence of Lord Cornwallis's plan of committing the administration of justice, civil and criminal, almost entirely to European agents, the expense of the necessary staff had become unmanageable, while a host of complainants were excluded from justice. The business to be done far exceeded the Company's means of discharging it, if their agents had been, to a man, perfectly qualified in all respects. More and more of the work was committed to native functionaries when it was found that even decisions of an inferior quality were preferable to delays, infrequent gaol deliveries, and the cruel penalties attending a denial of justice; and in 1827 nineteen-twentieths of the civil suits instituted throughout the country were decided by native judges. The consequence was a further extension

of the experiment. The judges were raised in position and emolument, and more work was confided to them; and a Court of Appeal was settled at Allahabad, for the use of litigants who lived too far from Calcutta to be easily able to apply there. These improvements were among the many which were originated by his predecessors, and only adopted and carried out by Lord William Bentinck. One more item may be added in this connection. By law, all British subjects were competent to serve on juries in India; but custom first, and then law, had pronounced half-castes not to be British subjects. In 1826 a bill was passed which enabled all "good and sufficient residents" to serve on juries, with the limitation that only Christian jurors should sit on the trials of Christians.

One of the first acts of special policy of Lord W. Bentinck's was the abolition of the suttee, or burning of widows — a superstition which his predecessors had discountenanced, but had not felt themselves able to prohibit. The more supervision was instituted, the more frequent the practice became: and more mischief was clearly done by Government recognition than good by suppressing attendant enormities. The new Governor-General thought it safe to try vigorous measures with the spiritless population of Bengal, among whom more than nineteen-twentieths of these sacrifices took place. He would hardly have ventured if there had been reason to suppose the native soldiery deeply

interested in the matter; but most of the Sepoys came from districts where the rite was least insisted on; their wives were not wont to be with them in cantonments; and it was thought sufficient to avoid using their services in the suppression. The police were charged with the enforcement of the new law, which treated as felony all participation in the sacrifice of human life by the burning or burying alive of women; and they had but little to do. After a few attempts at stolen meetings, very like those of "the ring" in English counties, the Hindoos of Bengal gave the matter up; and the prohibition was extended to the other presidencies without any difficulty. Opposing appeals were made to the home authorities by Hindoos who approved and disapproved the measure; and the petition of the latter was regularly argued before the Privy Council in 1832, and dismissed. The abolition was by no means so general as was at first concluded. It related to only 37,000,000 out of the 77,000,000 of India of that day. It indirectly affected about 19,000,000 more, in the subsidiary States over which we had most influence; but 21,000,000 remained entirely unaffected by it. It is impossible to say how far the sullenness of the disappointed Brahmins may have aggravated ill feelings from other causes during the interval; but, on the other hand, several native princes have proscribed the custom because the General Government did so with success.

The difficult question of the introduction of

Christianity into India was warmly and widely discussed at this time. By the charter of 1813 missionaries were permitted to go to India—a measure about which there could have scarcely been two opinions if the country had been hitherto open to settlement by all who chose to go. As it was, the question was surrounded with difficulties, then as it is now. The points on which rational people were agreed were that extreme ignorance and presumption in the missionaries who went out at the beginning of the century had produced deadly effects, not only by aiding the disaffection at Vellore, but by discrediting the profession of Christianity by more enlightened and less egotistical persons. All agreed that the Company were pledged not to interfere with the religion of their subjects, whatever it might be; and all the Company's most trusted officers on the spot declared that missionary efforts among either Hindoos or Mohammedans would put a stop to the improvements, material and moral, in the condition of the people, which were becoming very marked. There seem to have been few, however, who perceived that the conversion of the Mussulman to Christianity is almost as impossible as that of the genuine Jew; and that the conversion of Hindoos had thus far been, and was likely to continue, a mere conformity from the sense of duty and fitness in their relation to their European superiors. But, over and above all this, there

were Christians in India to the number of many thousands; and they needed a clergy, and justified an episcopate. At first it was proposed to have four bishops, for the three presidencies and Ceylon; but the charter of 1813 provided for one, who should occupy the see of Calcutta, and act as archdeacon at the other presidencies. Bishop Middleton went out, as the first bishop, in 1814. He found he had only thirty-two clergy under him; and they were, in fact, military chaplains, over whom he held a divided authority. They were widely scattered, with no parishes, and many of them no churches; and the few who were settled at civil stations were as much under civil as their moveable brethren were under military control. He did the best he could under such unfavourable circumstances, causing new churches to be built, and congregations formed, and establishing some degree of order and communion among the European Christians in different parts of the country. Under his sanction the Missionary College of Calcutta was founded, for the instruction of natives and others for the offices of preaching, catechising, and school tuition, and for the aid and encouragement of missionary labours in general. Bishop Middleton died in 1822, and was succeeded by the beloved Reginald Heber. According to testimony from all quarters, great and increasing surprise was caused by the ill-success of all missionary efforts in India. Vast sums were

expended, and more and more missionaries were sent out; and still it was very rarely that the hope of the conversion of an individual could be entertained: and when it was, disappointment almost invariably ensued. It is easy to see now that the whole development and training of the mind of Asiatics of any religion were so entirely different from the European, and especially the British, that it was impossible for the two to obtain the same point of view. Through all that is said, and very truly, of the difficulty of dealing with such an institution as that of caste, and with other obstacles, the fundamental truth is that the unprepared mind, whether Hindoo or Mussulman, developed under Asiatic conditions, cannot be in sympathy, more or less, intellectually or morally, with the Christianised European mind. The only true method is now, for the most part, agreed on: the natives must pass through a great process of secular education—that of life under improved conditions—before it can embrace any new dogmatic system. Lord William Bentinck and his immediate predecessors were faithful representatives of the views of their employers in this respect, being devoted to the work of native education, as the only genuine preparation for religious conversion. Before Lord Hastings went home, the missionaries applied their services to the Christians at the presidencies, instead of the hopeless task of

converting Brahmins and Mohammedans; and when they did attack the hostile faiths, it was chiefly by means of schools, in which improved views and principles were to be conveyed in the form of literature. Many trials were made of English schools, as a higher stage to be reached through those in which the native languages were employed; but the attempt created mistrust, till the British at Calcutta offered to deliver over an English college there to the management of enlightened Hindoos. The thing was done; and thus arose the English College of Calcutta. Lord W. Bentinck carried on with zeal all such schemes; and he originated many more. New schools and classes were encouraged all over the country. The best superintendence and stimulus were given to the native institutions; but the Governor-General's earnest desire was that the English language and literature should be the medium through which the native mind and destiny should be elevated in all directions. He proved, clearly enough, the happy consequences which would ensue; but he overlooked the impracticable character of the enterprise on which he wasted a great deal of virtuous effort. Bishop Heber died too soon to effect much beyond establishing a strong interest between the English public and that of Hindostan. We shall even yet make more use than we have made of the disclosures of the life of India offered in his Journals.

Lord W. Bentinck completed the extirpation of Thuggery, or the strangling of travellers for booty, by a special sect of divergent Mohammedans. By taking no notice of the railings of the press he left it practically free, though the re-imposed restrictions remained unrepealed. The people say the press was free in his time; and it was so for all practical purposes. In his time some important public works went on, especially some embankments of the Cauvery, by which a sufficient area was made fertile to have served as a lesson to all existing and future authorities as to how to prevent famine, and secure the material welfare of the inhabitants. The new provinces across the bay, and especially Arracan, were becoming so productive, under the influences of peace, as to afford hopes of universal food and an extending commerce. If space allowed, we might trace the footsteps of advancing civilization over the whole peninsula prior to the great famine of 1837; but it must suffice to say that when the commercial function of the Company ceased, under the charter of 1833, there was every encouragement to believe that through such rulers as Lord W. Bentinck, they might make their rule as remarkable under the pacific *régime* of a later time as their commercial enterprise had been in the old days, when the factor was a brave adventurer first, and next an *impromptu* soldier, ready to turn statesman when necessity required.

It is under the head of social amelioration that it seems right to notice a region of our Indian empire which has hardly yet come into view. Ceylon was at this time the most effectually improved part of our eastern dominion; and some of the most effectual improvements took place while Lord William Bentinck was at Calcutta, though not exactly in consequence of his rule. For many years before, Ceylon had been virtually governed by the Ministry, and not by the India Company; and it remains so at this day: but in a historical survey, its improvements should be credited to the period in which they occurred.

After passing under the rule of the Portuguese, and then of the Dutch, and being fought for by all parties in all the European wars carried on in the eastern seas, Ceylon became ours at the peace of Amiens, remaining under the rule of its own kings, till 1815, when the chiefs of the island invited the British to annex it to their dominions, because the tyranny of the reigning king had become intolerable. Nothing but misrule could spoil such a country as Ceylon, with its natural gifts and graces, and its boundless power for the production of wealth. Besides the ordinary treasures of the sea, pearls and pearl-shells abounded within reach of its shores; and cinnamon and other spices, with all tropical agricultural products were obtainable to any amount. But the people, chiefly Buddhists, with some Hindoos

(worshippers of Siva, however) to the north, were priest-ridden; and their apathy and ignorance made them the mere victims of a sovereign who was more like a fiend than a man. The change within a few years after their welfare was fairly taken in hand by the British was remarkable. The benevolent Sir Alexander Johnston, Chief-Justice there in 1811, introduced trial by jury, in the face of much mockery and evil boding; and it answered beyond all expectation. In rapid succession other ameliorations took place. Slavery was abolished; the monopolies by which a once prodigious commerce had been reduced to almost nothing, were repealed; and the people were relieved from labour-taxes and other oppressions which had deeply aggravated their constitutional apathy. A field so circumscribed, and so abounding in natural promise, drew missionaries from Europe and America; and those of the United States were distinguished above all others by conspicuous success. Sir Alexander Johnston always used to say that they succeeded by means of the sound sense with which they enlisted native self-interest first in works of industry, creating a civilization which opened the way for religion. Altogether, the prospect was most cheering in Lord William Bentinck's time. Ceylon was ruled by a Governor, assisted by two councils—legislative and executive. More and more natives were entering the lower offices of the government: justice was made easily accessible: a police, on the English

principle, pervaded the country, and the low proportion of crime was remarkable. The people adopted the practice of vaccination, with sufficient readiness, and they deposited largely in the Savings Bank. In a short time after the opening of the Savings Bank at Columbo, it paid off a Government loan of 2,000*l.*, leaving a surplus in its treasury. Agriculture and commerce flourished under the partial emancipation of labour and trade; new roads were opened, and British capital and skill began to flow in. The population was then somewhat under a million and a quarter, or rather more than 46 to the square mile. The total number of schools, government and private, civil and military, was above 1,000, of which 63 were Roman Catholic.

It is true that there was a sad revulsion in store, fifteen years later, when the imposition of impracticable taxes by an ill-judging Government was to induce the rebellion of an unarmed multitude, and to injure the British name and authority accordingly: but it would not the less be wrong to pass over the reviving impulse given, at the time I am treating of, to an agriculture which once sufficed to support a dense population over a wide surface since lapsed to jungle and swamp, and to a commerce which in ancient days rivalled that of the most flourishing ports in Asia. In 1835 there was every reason to believe that Ceylon might be retrieved from its long lapse, and elevated to a higher civilization than its proudest traditions had ever pretended.

CHAPTER XIX.

BEGINNING OF AN EXTERNAL POLICY.

1835—1842.

"Be not over-exquisite
To shape the fashion of uncertain evils."—MILTON.

"It is said that the Persian army went as far as that: but no one knows what became of it afterwards, unless it be the Ammonites, and those whom they told. The only certain thing is that it did not go as far as Ammon, and that it never returned to Egypt. Thus perished that army."—HERODOTUS.

"Le plus grand défaut de la pénétration n'est pas de n'aller point jusqu'au but; c'est de le passer."—LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

THE commercial character of the Company, much restricted in 1813, was extinguished by the next Charter, in 1833. From April, 1834, this great association dropped entirely the venerable title by which it became known in the history of England—that of a Company of British Merchants trading to the East. Henceforth they were to be simply *the East India Company*. Even their tea trade was given up, and all the commercial property of the Company sold. Their real capital was estimated at 21,000,000*l.*; their dividends were guaranteed by the Act to the amount of 630,000*l.*, or 10½ per cent. on a nominal capital of 6,000,000*l.*; these dividends were made

chargeable on the revenues of India, and redeemable by Parliament in 1874. India was thrown open for settlement quite freely; natives and emigrants had henceforth professedly equal claim to office and employment, and there was to be no distinction on account of race, colour, or religion. Great hopes were founded on these provisions by all who were unaware of the bottomless chasm which yawns between the interior nature of the Asiatic and the European races; and even the most cautious trusted that the genuine and permanent civilization of India was at length provided for. As for the commercial effects of the Charter, they were clear enough. Within ten years the trade with China doubled, and the value of British exports to India and Ceylon increased from two millions and a half to six millions and nearly half. How it was that one portion of the new arrangements worked so well and others not at all, was a subject of earnest speculation when the Charter was renewed in 1853, and during the intervening twenty years. It was stated in Parliament that not one native had obtained an office after 1833 who could not as well have held it before; and the reply to this was not a contradiction, but a statement of the number of natives employed as judges, deputy-collectors, and deputy-registrars. The main fact in defence was that 96 per cent. of causes were adjudicated on by native functionaries; and this was met by allegations of the extreme badness of the decisions thus

awarded. Those who judged by the average amount of peasant income declared the people to be in a state of fearful destitution, while, on the other hand, the increase in the imports of articles of popular consumption was pointed out as the best proof of a rising condition. There had been a famine in Hindostan Proper in 1837 so fearful that the British residents at Agra and Cawnpore could not take their evening drive, on account of the smell of corpses too numerous for burial; and cholera and smallpox followed, sweeping away a multitude who had outlived the dearth. This was not necessarily a proof of general poverty; and those who called it an accident declared that it would not happen again; for that our new provinces, on the Burmah side, would henceforth be the granaries of rice-eating India; and that the prodigious effects of irrigation, wherever restored (as in some parts of the Deccan), showed that the fate of India, in regard to food, was wholly in the hands of its rulers. This was universally felt to be true; and the natural consequence was an influx of petitions from natives for the vigorous prosecution of public works. Still, amidst much material improvement and external agreement about the means of more, the European and Asiatic races drew no nearer to each other in mind and heart. Much was said, in a kindly spirit and in eloquent language, in the parliamentary debates on the charter of 1853, about the progress of education, the increase of churches,

and the means of moral and religious sympathy and advancement; but yet these were all only means; and no one could show that the end was attained. This is a matter which calls for no exposition now. An extinguisher is put upon all arguments, *pro* and *con*. We know now that for one hundred years daily prayers have been uttered in Mussulman worship for the Mogul rulers and their restoration, and that a vast multitude of those whom we were striving to raise to a condition of fellow-citizenship with ourselves, have only been waiting for the expiration of our century to turn us—not only out of their country, but out of the world. Meantime, what the petitioners professed to want was a great purification in the administration of justice; a rectification in the land tenures; and a vigorous prosecution of public works. All these were discussed in the session of 1853, and the new Charter then voted accomplished some considerable changes.

It was seriously debated whether to preserve the Double Government—few pretending to say that it had worked well, but at best doubting whether any other arrangement would work better. "The Company" was declared to have become a mere fiction; and the Board of Directors to be a blind behind which the general Government really ruled India. Those who desired to have the Queen at once proclaimed in every town in India, and to have a new Secretary of State for Indian affairs, did not obtain

their desire: but the number of Directors was reduced from thirty to eighteen, of whom six were eventually to be nominated by the Crown, while half of the twelve elected by the Directors themselves must have served ten years in India. An English Commission was appointed to promote good law and a good administration of it in India; and several minor provisions were made, suitable to the more marked political character of the Company. We have since seen great changes made in regard to Indian patronage—civil offices being thrown open to competition, and admission to military training being made more easily attainable. The exclusive East India College at Haileybury is to be closed; and thus was one after another of the characteristics of the great Company passing away. Something had happened in the interval between the two last Charters which had indeed brought the Company into very close relations with the politics of the empire at large. A great European controversy had been contested in their name, on their territory, and at their expense. In the debate on the new Charter, in 1853, the Directors declared their finances to be in a better condition than appeared from the figures, because 15,000,000*l.* of recent expenditure had been incurred for a war which was not Indian but European. On the last occasion of a new Charter, the Company's debt was 38,000,000*l.*; it was now (twenty years later) 53,000,000*l.*; but the

existing balances were so much larger than on the former occasion, that the great wars of the interval —those of Burmah, Affghanistan, and Scinde—had in fact caused an increase of less than eight millions and a half, though the Affghan war had cost fifteen. The difference might be taken as a fair measure of the improvement in Indian finance. Thus it appeared that the time had arrived, predicted by Mackintosh, and by many before and after him, when the chief danger of our Indian empire would appear to be from a foreign foe: for this alone could be the meaning of a European war being carried on in India. It was even so, as all our readers well know. Few of them can have forgotten the Affghan war; but some may be unaware of its relations with our empire, east and west; and our review of British life in India would be unnecessarily defective if we omitted to sketch a group of events so remarkable in themselves, so suggestive of change, and so clearly exhibiting a new phase in Indian Government.

There is an old Eastern proverb, that no one can be King of Hindostan without being first Lord of Cabul. Yet, when Lord W. Bentinck came home in 1835, and Lord Auckland went out to succeed him, the English held Hindostan, as far as the desert frontier which extended from the Hill States of Ghurwal (which Simla and other summer stations render familiar to English imaginations) to the sea, without having ever been lords of Cabul. Alexander

had gone by way of Cabul to India, after taking Herat, near the borders of Persia; and Tamerlane conquered it on his route to the Ganges, and Baber in his descent upon Delhi, where he set up his throne. Sultan Mahmoud made Ghuznee, in the same region, his basis of operations in founding the Mohammedan empire in India. It was natural for the natives of India to speculate on our not being lords of Cabul, seeing that we were masters of Hindostan: but the English at home, who are not too well-informed in regard to Asiatic traditions, might easily wonder, any time within twenty years, what business we had at Cabul. How did we become involved in an Affghan war, which cost us a deluge of blood and tears, of which the loss of fifteen millions of treasure is only the bare material record? It is a problem not to be solved in this place how such a war could be instituted, against the will of the Company, just after the Company had been left with a territorial function alone. Its sole business after April, 1834, was to manage the political and administrative affairs of India: and yet a course of political action was entered on presently after which was disapproved by the Company from first to last. In their own words, it was a European conflict carried on on their territory, and at the expense mainly of their subjects. The only possible answer to the question why they allowed it is, that they could not help it. What was this strong compulsion? A few glances round the scene may help to account for it.

It will be remembered that there was an alarm in 1808 about invasion from the north-west while Napoleon and Alexander of Russia were friends, and Turkey their tool, and Persia waiting their commands. Metcalfe was sent to the Punjaub, and Elphinstone to Cabul, to prepare alliances in preparation for such an attack. Through all subsequent changes, when Napoleon and Alexander were in their graves, the alarm of an invasion in Asia by our European foes or rivals was occasionally revived; and it was particularly strong when Lord Auckland went out to India. In Persia, our envoy, Mr. Ellis, found in 1835 that the young monarch whom we had seated in peace on his throne was the humble servant of the Czar Nicholas, instead of the friend of England. He was going to besiege Herat, for which he might or might not have good reason; but he was going further than Herat, intending to claim Ghuznee and Candahar; and if he obtained them, he would be very near the Punjaub; and nothing else lay between him and us. The conclusion in England was that it was as the Czar's pioneer that the Shah was thus penetrating eastwards; and it was anticipated that, in a very short time, Russian consular agents would be settled in all the great towns up to the frontier of the Punjaub. At the same time, the Affghan rulers—a set of turbulent princes, always at feud among themselves—were afraid of Runjeet Singh, our Sikh ally, and promised aid to Persia, and also to Russia, in return for support against their

neighbours at Lahore. This combination really was alarming, and the British envoy reasonably desired to see peace made between the Herat sovereign and the Shah. Terms were offered on the side of Herat; but the Shah marched on to the siege instead of accepting them. It has been a matter of dispute to this day whether Russia encouraged or discouraged the Shah in this course. The Czar declared that he had always openly disapproved it; while there was a great amount of testimony that Russian agents were everywhere busy in obtaining aid for the Persian enterprise, and spreading reports of a great Russian reinforcement being on the march to join the Shah's army. Herat was besieged under the guidance of Russian officers; and it was defended by the help of an English officer—Lieut. Pottinger, who so enabled the place to hold out as to baffle the Shah, and compel him, at the end of ten months, to raise the siege, and turn homewards. The policy of Europe was in truth represented in little at that spot at the foot of the Affghan mountains; the real conflict was between the aggressive Russian officers managing the siege without, with their 40,000 Persians and 80 cannon, and the gallant and vigilant Pottinger within, who was managing the defence as if the fate of India hung on his making the crumbling walls, and the hungry people, and the tired garrison hold out till the Shah should give up the game. And if there were busy Russians stirring up the towns against the

kings of Hindostan, lest they should become lords of Cabul, there were also adventurous Englishmen, wandering in strange places, each charged with a mission relating to the same controversy. Lieut. Wyburd was winning his way to Khiva in 1835, to see what the Khan there knew of the reported army of Russians, and to obtain his good-will on the English side. Colonel Stoddart presented himself to Pottinger at Herat, and was so deep in the interest of the case as to be ready to try another formidable journey, as perilous as Wyburd's. He learned at Bokhara that Wyburd had been murdered very early in his mission. Captain Conolly followed Wyburd's track, and then joined Stoddart at Bokhara, where they were beheaded together in 1843, after enduring a long and loathsome imprisonment. These were the first fruits of the policy of going out into the wilderness to meet a rumoured foe, instead of awaiting his possible attack in a well guarded position at home. Thus were the scouts cut off at once, who would have done good service in watch and ward within the camp.

Pottinger's defence of Herat was a piece of individual gallantry; and the three envoys who were sent wandering into Central Asia had each a particular and speculative mission. There must be besides a new seat of diplomacy between the Persian territory and our own; and advantage was taken of overtures from Cabul to establish a mission there. Dost

Mohammed, the ruler of Cabul, applied to all parties at once, in his dread of Runjeet Singh—to Lord Auckland as well as the Czar and the Shah; and the Governor-General at once sent Captain Burnes, who arrived at Cabul while the Persians were on their march to Herat. Burnes's mission had avowedly a commercial object; but he found a Persian competitor so busy at Candahar in showing the Affghans how much better the Russian and Persian alliance was for them than the British, that he declared the British could not stand their ground but by entering into a political rivalship. On no better security than the opinion of Burnes and the sincerity of Dost Mohammed, the very serious step was taken of investing our envoy with political powers, and entering into a competition with Russia, involving the India Company in a policy which they wholly disapproved, and costing the English nation dearer than any conceivable consequences which could have arisen from leaving it to Russia to get to India if she could, across the snows and the sands, the frosts and the heats, the parched plains and the impracticable defiles which an army must struggle through before reaching our frontier, and meeting a fresh army face to face. As it was, we lost an entire army without having encountered a Russian.

Whilst Burnes was at Cabul, sending a series of "startling disclosures" to Calcutta, and while the Governor-General continued to be startled in due

response, two successive ambassadors at St. Petersburg, Lords Durham and Clanricarde, were satisfied that Russia was not at that time thinking of invading India, and the Russian ambassador in London convinced Lord Palmerston of the same thing. The Czar even changed his official agents in the East at our desire, and, as we have seen, Herat was not taken by the Persians; yet was an act ventured upon at Calcutta which must have appeared rash even if a hostile army had been in full march upon our frontier. In October, 1838, the Governor-General issued a proclamation to the Bengal division of the troops then at Simla, explaining our difficulty with Persia, complaining of the conduct of Dost Mohammed towards our ally, Runjeet Singh, and announcing the intention of the Company's government to depose the rulers of Cabul and Candahar, as belonging to a usurping race, and to seat a rival claimant, Shah Soojah, on the throne. Everybody in England, and most people in India, asked who was Shah Soojah, and what business we had to do more than fulfil the terms of our alliance with Runjeet Singh. The very feuds about the succession among the Affghan princes so weakened their states that we might advantageously have left them to their own disputes; whereas, at the moment when they were least likely to make war upon us we involved ourselves in their quarrels, for the sake of setting up a prince who

would be thereby bound to keep the peace towards us. After one of the princes had seen his fine province of Cashmere annexed to the Punjaub under Runjeet Singh, and Peshawur reduced to the rank of a vassal city, while another saw Balkh incorporated with Bokhara, and next, Scinde declared independent under its own Ameers, it was a most unnecessary act for us to interfere; but the fact was, a panic had possessed the Calcutta government and its agents in the north-west; and they saw the Russian hosts approaching through every medium of circumstance. If the Affghan princes were strong and united, they would overwhelm Runjeet Singh, and give a passage to the Russians: and if they were weak, they would be no defence against the Russians: so Shah Soojah was set up as the English tool, at all risks. British troops were to accompany his soldiery to Cabul, to ensure his accession, and were to retire when he should be firmly seated. Thus it was that we had a British army in Affghanistan. It was an imposing force when Lord Auckland and Runjeet Singh met at Ferozepore in November, 1838, and the greeting of the allied potentates was a really splendid spectacle, so magnificent were their retinues and soldiery; but when it was known that the Shah was retreating from Herat, the Bengal force was at once considerably reduced. A strong body of Bombay troops marched through Scinde, according to treaty; but

they met with such treatment there that it was necessary to bring more to keep all safe in our rear, and to establish a permanent force in the country at the expense of the Ameers. Thus were our obligations and liabilities increasing with every step we took in an anticipatory policy with regard to Russia.

The rest of the dreary story may be very briefly told; for everybody knows it whose memory can carry him 15 years back. The Bombay force had to fight its way up through Scinde, and Shah Soojah's army marched down the Indus to meet it. The Belooches saw from their hill stations what was going on, and of course disapproved of their new neighbours, making use of their opportunity to damage and despoil the invaders. It was March: and in the jungly plains the soldiers were struck down by the heat, while in the mountains the snow blinded them by driving in their faces. The enemy dammed up the rivers, so as to let out a deluge where the invaders were coming; and the Belooches hovered in flank and rear, carrying off camels, stores, and stragglers. One of the princes was negotiating with the British Political Agent at the very moment when he was sending his bands into the Bolan pass, to make the passage through it a mere running the gauntlet. Our soldiers emerged from it without tents, camels, baggage, or food, so that the camp-followers fought for the carcases of the horses which fell dead on the

road. Our officers, in their despatches, said that this march had no parallel but the retreat from Moscow; and Shah Soojah's force was reduced from 6,000 to 1,500 men. He entered Candahar without opposition, and Sir John (afterwards Lord) Keane took Ghuznee for him with great skill and hardihood. When Dost Mohammed heard that it had fallen, and that his son was a prisoner in the hands of the English, he withdrew to Bokhara, and left Cabul open to his rival, who entered it on the 7th of August 1839.

The work was supposed to be now achieved, though many a warning reached the managers of this policy that they had better not feel secure. There were well-disposed men in Cabul itself who offered secret intelligence that plots were hatching against us: but Burnes (now Sir Alexander), through whom Lord Auckland received his intelligence, would listen to nothing which did not corroborate his sanguine hopes; and Sir William M'Naghten, the new Political Resident, was for a time equally delighted with our happy lodgment at Cabul. Sir J. Keane carried away too many soldiers, while a crowd of women and children congregated at the new station. Burnes encouraged everybody to come, and garden as he did, and cultivate the pleasant people he lived amongst. As soon as the Bengal and Bombay forces were in great part gone home, the popular hatred of the imposed sovereign began to appear, and in the dreaded form of threats to appeal to Russia. The

Affghans showed us that we had been virtually inviting the Russians by our precipitancy in forestalling them. The Czar did in fact declare war against Khiva towards the close of the year, on the ostensible ground of aggressions by the Khiva people. It was in that winter that the Russian army was lost in the snow, and by famine and pestilence, only a few stragglers returning to tell the Czar how difficult a matter it was to march in the direction of India—at once a lesson for him and a rebuke to us.

After a time, Dost Mohammed surrendered, by quietly walking into the British camp, and placing himself at the disposal of the authorities. We, in England, heard of him as the ornament of the parties at Government House, and as playing chess with the Governor-General's sister. Whatever he might be at chess, he was very able at a deeper game.

In April, 1841, General Elphinstone, aged and infirm, was put in command of the troops in Affghanistan. He saw nothing wrong, though the hill-tribe of the Ghilzees was at that time sworn to avenge on the British the death of a chief besieged and killed by misadventure. Five thousand of their warriors were watching their opportunity from day to day. Major Pottinger, arriving from Calcutta in May, saw at once that the British force was far too weak, though Lord Auckland had just ventured to offend the native chiefs by reducing their allowances, as if we stood in no need of their good-will. Already

the Punjaub had broken down behind us. Runjeet Singh died in 1839, and in a few months his two next heirs were dead; one by poison, if the general belief is well-founded, and the other by the fall of a beam as he was passing under a gateway on his camel. The consequent disputes about the succession made the Punjaub a new scene of anxiety, instead of the sure refuge which we had considered it. Again, no small sensation was excited at Cabul when the news came that the Peel and Aberdeen ministry had caused the recal of Lord Auckland, and the despatch of Lord Ellenborough to fill his place. Would the Auckland policy be sustained by Lord Ellenborough? His course was prepared by events.

After an anxious summer, during which the gathering of the storm was watched by the wise and made a jest of by the sanguine, the day of doom was drawing near. The best officers were the most depressed, because most aware of the necessity of good command under the approaching crisis, and of the utter imbecility of their commander. They did not know the whole truth—the native scheme that the British should be apparently allowed to return to India; but that only one should be left alive—to sit, deprived of his limbs, at the entrance of the pass, with a letter in his teeth, declaring him to be the one survivor of the British in Affghanistan. Our readers remember how nearly this came true; how the garrison of Jellalabad saw a single horseman

approach, reeling in his saddle, and how he told them that he alone had escaped to tell the fate of his countrymen and countrywomen. More were afterwards recovered; but it was a lost expedition; and it occupies its place in history as one of the great catastrophes of nations. The gay and confident Burnes had no misgivings till the Cabul rabble stormed his house on the 3rd of November, and shot him and his brother in their own balcony. The careworn M'Naghten said in December, that a thousand deaths would be better than the hell of anxiety he had been living in for six weeks; and on the 23rd he was murdered, and his head and green spectacles made a plaything of by the soldiers of Akbar Khan, Dost Mohammed's second son.

The British, half-starved and without ammunition, looking in vain for help from below and behind, and distant a mile and a half from the citadel, which should have been their grand bulwark, were "advised" by the enemy to go back to India; and on the 6th of January, 1842, they set out. Their doom was clear before five miles were over. Of the 4,500 soldiers, 12,000 camp followers, and a great body of women and children, only one individual accomplished the march. At the first halt, they saw the glare from their burning cantonments as they sat in the snow. The women were pillaged of everything but the scanty clothing they wore; the children were lost in the hubbub; and the snow was

soaked with the blood and strewn with the corpses of our soldiers till there was *not* one left. The camp followers, frost-bitten and benumbed, lay down in the road, or crawled among the rocks, to die of cold and hunger.

The generals did not appear, because they were obstructed below, and had enough to do to save our military reputation. That reputation *was* saved, the errors of the Affghanistan war being attributed to the weakness of civilians, who laid themselves open to irresponsible military importunities. Large reinforcements were sent, and able commanders found means to get them through the passes. General Pollock for the first time in history proved that the Khyber pass can be traversed in the face of an enemy, and relieved the gallant Sale after his heroic defence of Jellalabad. General Nott came up from Candahar, victorious, though the reinforcements sent could not reach him. A considerable number of women, children, and wounded or isolated officers were recovered; our flag was planted on the citadel at Cabul, and the bazaar—a work of Aurungzebe's—was burned. General Elphinstone died in captivity before things took this turn; and Shah Soojah was murdered near his own capital—to be succeeded presently by Dost Mohammed—relieved of his fears in all directions.

Lord Ellenborough by proclamation commanded the evacuation of Affghanistan, declaring, to the

astonishment of the Affghans, that it is contrary to British principles and policy to force a ruler on a reluctant people. It was for the Affghans and all India to argue whether the British were perfidious, or simply infirm; and we are now suffering the practical consequences of the speculation.

CHAPTER XX.

BULWARKS OF AN EXTERNAL POLICY.

1830—1856.

"For to think that a handful of people can, with the greatest courage and policy in the world, embrace too large extent of dominion, it may hold for a time, but will fail suddenly."—BACON.

"In the garden more grows than the gardener sows."—*Proverb.*

"Is this the promised end?"—LEAR.

IN the slight mention made of Scinde in our review of the Affghan war, it was plain that the most disastrous complications may arise, and are almost sure to arise, when once aggressive measures against a foreign state are undertaken for precautionary purposes. Our Bombay forces, we have seen, had to fight their way up the Indus, and then through the Beloochees, before meeting their ostensible enemy in Affghanistan. The conquest and annexation of Scinde and the Punjaub were inevitable consequences of the Affghan war, though Lord Auckland would no doubt have recoiled from the charge of so flagrantly violating the orders and the professions of both halves of the double government at home by so vast an extension of their Indian

Empire. Sir Charles Napier always called the conquest of Scinde "the tail of the Affghan war;" and there was presently nobody to deny that it was so.

Before that unhappy speculation, our authority and influence extended to the Sutlej. We had alliances beyond it; but it was our true boundary. A line of three states had intervened between us and the mountaineers beyond the Indus; Cashmere, lying among the sources of the Five Rivers; the Punjaub, through which they flowed and converged; and Scinde, through which they ran to the sea after uniting to form the Indus. Cashmere had belonged to Cabul, but was easily obtained by Runjeet Singh, and annexed to the Punjaub in 1819. With the other two states we had treaties of alliance. Our relations with Runjeet Singh have been described. Those with Scinde were less simple and stable.

Scinde was the scene of successive barbaric invasions and tyrannies from the time it was first known to the British till fifteen years ago. While it was under the rule of a tribe of military fanatics from Persia, who established themselves there in the beginning of the last century, the English first gained a footing in Scinde, planting a factory at Tatta, in the delta of the Indus, in 1775. Broils and troubles among the inhabitants rendered the establishment precarious. Sometimes it was suspended for years, and then restored, while changes of dynasty went on; but when our envoys at Lahore and Cabul obtained

pledges that the French should not be received at those courts, the same engagement was entered into by the Princes of Scinde, who in 1820 promised to exclude the Americans also. By this time our possession of Cutch had led us up to their frontier; and it was necessary to station a military force within view of it to secure good faith from allies who had no very clear idea what Americans and Frenchmen could have to do with their affairs. Commerce was still the main object, however: and the first step towards accomplishing it was to examine the Indus. This might be done, it was thought, in spite of the jealousy of the Ameers (Lords) of Scinde, by sending a present of five dapple-grey horses to Runjeet Singh by that route, as the princes could hardly refuse a passage in such a case. Our Political Resident in Cutch, Sir Henry Pottinger, advised this, adding the suggestion that a handsome coach should be also sent, as absolutely requiring a water conveyance. A good observer was despatched with it, who certainly made great use of his eyes and his opportunities. It was poor Burnes; and perhaps some of us may remember the sensation excited at home when he published his travels, and told us how he had navigated this mighty river up to Lahore, and what splendid commercial results might be expected when it was thrown open to commerce. Again and again the English were turned back with insult; but at length they were speeded up the country as fast as

royal favour could carry them. The Ameers sent them dinners of seventy-two dishes, all served in silver; but the poverty of the country was extreme nevertheless. For hundreds of miles there was not even a ferry-boat, and the natives crossed the stream each on his bundle of reeds. This was in 1831. A Beloochee soldier told Burnes that all was over, now that the English had seen their river; and he was not the only one who expressed the same fear. More treaties followed, and double ones as new cliques of princes divided the empire; and in 1832 we began to have specific rights in Scinde. We might use the Indus freely for commerce, but no vessel of war was to enter it. No merchant was to settle in Scinde, and travellers must have passports. A tariff was to be granted by the princes, whose officers were to abide by it; and the princes engaged to alter it if it proved objectionable, and to help to put down the border robbers of Cutch. The tariff and tolls were settled by another treaty in 1834, and Colonel Pottinger was appointed Political Agent for Scinde. The tolls were to be taken (not on goods, but on vessels) only at the mouth of the Indus; and the produce was to be divided among the powers whose territory bordered the river; viz., the British, the Ameers, Runjeet Singh, and a tributary prince whose lands lay between the Sutlej and the Indus. In a few months more a steamboat was navigating the Indus, the property of a Mogul merchant at Bombay.

Throughout the districts of our cotton manufacture, and among the abolitionists of the United States, there were great rejoicings over that steamboat; but the anticipations of a good supply of cotton down that channel have not as yet been fulfilled, though there is every reason for hope that they will be. It was Lord Auckland's policy that intercepted that benefit as so many others. There is "a law of storms" in politics as in natural philosophy; and in this case, among the wrecks on the verge of the tornado was Scinde. From the time when Lord Auckland conceived his anti-Russian policy, he desired to use as his tools the allies who lay between his dominions and Cabul; and the ruin of Scinde as an independent state was the consequence—a consequence, we must add, anything but disastrous to the inhabitants at large, whose condition could scarcely be worse than it was when the British entered the country.

Runjeet Singh quarrelled with the Ameers, and threatened invasion, requiring of the Calcutta Government a supply of arms to be sent up the Indus. This was rendered impossible by the treaty; but Lord Auckland used the opportunity to obtain such a footing in Scinde that it could be made the base of operations in the Cabul invasion, when it was determined to use the Bolan pass in preference to the Khyber. The Ameers employed their utmost endeavours to send Shah Soojah to Cabul by the Khyber pass; and, failing, the march of the Shah's

troops and the British was made as difficult and destructive as we have seen. The treaty was broken through on all hands. The Ameers had violated its commercial conditions; and now Lord Auckland brought his armament up the Indus. All pretence of cordial alliance was at an end, and a subsidiary force was to be stationed in Scinde, at the expense of the Ameers. The town of Bukkur was given up, and Upper Scinde was admitted by the princes to be a British dependency. The Calcutta Government promised to defend Scinde from foreign aggression, and to keep down internal feuds; and the princes engaged to support the necessary British force, and harbour their military stores; to restrain the Beloochee chiefs; to have no political dealings unknown to the British Resident, the same engagement being taken on the other side; to abolish the tolls on the Indus; to pay 200,000*l.*; and to furnish a contingent for the Affghan war, if required. In order to humble the Ameers sufficiently, this treaty was made in as many copies as there were Ameers, the copies slightly varying from each other, so that no acknowledgment was made of any head ruler in Scinde. This transaction happened in 1839. The misfortune of the case was that the policy of Lord Auckland left no option to his successor. It was too late now to restore Scinde to the Ameers; and no Governor-General who had been made aware of the vices of their rule, and the miseries of their people, could

desire it: but the only alternative was between withdrawing from Scinde altogether and making it British territory. To Sir Charles Napier the work was assigned. As a military achievement, his conquest of Scinde was eminently brilliant; but his professional exploit was presently eclipsed by his own merits as an administrator. His advent and his rule were blessed at length by all Scindians, except the profligate and treacherous Ameers, who alone have been sufferers by the annexation of Scinde to the territories of the Company.

Sir Charles Napier was ordered to Scinde by Lord Ellenborough immediately on the new Governor-General's assumption of power. He was directed to assume entire control, civil and military, there and in Beloochistan. He did so in September, 1842. His first office seems to have been that of Censor-General, so clear were his own aims, and so far did he find all parties out of the way of them. After a grand reception by the Ameers, he let them know in writing that he was aware of their double dealing, and of the traitorous hopes which were at the bottom of their delays and pretences. He rebuked the mode of living of the British Political Residents, whose pomp could not be sustained but at heavy cost to the people of the country: and he discovered that, here as elsewhere, grievous tyranny was imputable to native officials, who cared less for the welfare of the inhabitants than for their own credit with their supe-

riors. The change wrought in a short time was marvellous. The Ameers were compelled to a choice of policy without waiting to see what became of the returning bodies of our soldiery from Cabul. They must choose, as Napier told them, between an honest policy and our alliance, and a treacherous one with war. Their nominal choice was one way, and their real one another; and their defeat was entire. They broke faith in all directions, trusting to their sandy deserts, their rock fortresses, their wild Beloochees, their sun and their river to save them from retribution. They perhaps trusted also in the humanity of the British General who had given them every opportunity to preserve peace. When they had mustered 60,000 of their troops in the neighbourhood of the 3,000 who composed Napier's force, and when proofs were obtained of their intention to murder the British officials during a conference, and every European woman and child who could be found in Scinde; and when they had actually slaughtered many British on the Lower Indus, the die was cast. This happened early in February, 1843; and on the 15th the Residency was attacked, its inmates taking refuge on board a steamer in the river. Foreseeing what would happen, the General had, in the preceding month, destroyed the desert fortress and stores of Emaum Ghur, on which the Ameers relied for a retreat—an achievement which Wellington declared in Parliament to be one of the most remarkable mili-

tary feats on record. It was now necessary to fight a pitched battle near the capital; and that conflict was the battle of Meeanee, fought on the 17th of February, 1843. The British were 2,400; the enemy 35,000—warriors by profession. Yet they lost 6,000 killed, all their ammunition and stores, their artillery and standards, and everything that their camp contained. The Ameers yielded up their swords, but ere long were again hoping "to Cabul the English." Within five weeks of the battle of Meeanee that of Hyderabad was fought, with equal honour to the British; and then Scinde was our own. The strong hand was necessary for some time longer in regard to the wandering forces of so desultory an enemy; but before Napier left Scinde, in 1846, the country was in a more peaceful and prosperous condition than ever before within the memory of man. The Ameers had plucked up or burned down villages by the score, to make hunting-grounds for their children; they had wrested from the people the earnings of industry, and all property that showed its head above water; no man was safe from their cruelty, and no woman from their profligacy. Under Napier's rule the tillage of the country so improved that the world was invited to buy grain where famines had been common occurrences; and robber bands settled down thankfully and peacefully as cultivators, leaving broad districts so secure that villages sprang up everywhere, almost within sight of each other.

Public works went on vigorously, and the world began to see what might be made of Kurachee as a port. With all, this, and after having sustained a season of pestilence, and fixed the payments of the people at a sum which they could easily afford, Sir Charles Napier had a surplus for the Company's treasury. The police systems which are so highly praised in the Punjaub, Madras, and Bombay, are adopted from that which he established in Scinde. The country which he found scantily peopled and lying desolate, he animated with a population of returned artisans and cultivators, who poured back from exile or from robber life, to swarm about his new canals, and rear his embankments, and raise harvests in the lands thus retrieved. For five years the old man sustained the climate and his excessive toils with the same high courage which had won the battles of Meeanee and Hyderabad; but in 1847 he resigned and came home. Lord Ellenborough, who had supported and approved his measures with steadiness and vigour, was recalled by the Directors, against the desire of Ministers, in April, 1844. This unprecedented exercise of the Directors' undisputed privilege deeply impressed the English nation with a sense of the dislike of conquest which prevailed in Leadenhall-street; and the sympathy felt by the English public in the Company's reluctance to enlarge our Indian dominions caused the merits of Napier's conquest and administration to be underrated at the time, and till very recently. It was not likely that a

war which was "the tail of the Affghan storm" should not be more or less involved in the disgrace of that fearful mistake.

The other war consequent on the same error, that of the Punjaub, came to a head in 1845. Lord Ellenborough had been succeeded by Sir Henry (afterwards Lord) Hardinge, who, as a soldier, was supposed to be more aware of the evils of an aggressive policy than civilians have sometimes proved themselves, while his moderation, and his dignified conceptions of national duty and character, would ensure a sufficiently strong policy. It was an appointment which united all suffrages. And yet Lord Hardinge, like his predecessors, found himself obliged to go through a war immediately on his arrival.

There had always been an expectation that whenever Runjeet Singh died, there would be trouble with his soldiery; and it soon appeared that some incursion was in contemplation, for which the Sikh troops were prepared by an able European training under French officers. While the strife about the succession was going on in the Punjaub, the military element of society there became supreme; and the government at Calcutta considered it necessary to move troops to the frontier to preserve peace, and reassure the inhabitants of whole districts which dreaded the incursions of a haughty and lawless soldiery. The Sikhs were alarmed at the approach

of English troops, and adopted the same course towards us that we had tried with their western neighbours—they crossed the frontier to forestal our doing it. Whether this move was a device of the Sikh chiefs, as some say it was, to get rid of the army, and perhaps to cause its destruction by the British, and thus to clear the field for their own factions; or whether war with the British was considered so inevitable that the invasion of our territory was intended as a measure of prudence, we need not here decide. The fact was that the Sikh soldiery gathered round the tomb of Runjeet Singh, preparing themselves for a great battle soon to happen; and that war was virtually declared at Lahore in November, 1845, and fairly begun by the troops crossing the Sutlej on the 11th of December, and taking up a position near Ferozepore. The old error prevailed in the British councils, the mistake denounced by Charles Metcalfe as fatal—that of undervaluing the enemy. The Sikhs had been considered unworthy to be opposed to the Affghans in Runjeet's time; and now we expected to drive them into the Sutlej at once; but we had never yet, in India, so nearly met with our match. The battle of Moodkee was fought under Sir Hugh Gough, on the 18th of December, and "the rabble" from the Punjaub astonished both Europeans and Sepoys by standing firm, manœuvring well, and rendering it no easy matter to close the day with honour to the

English arms. This ill-timed contempt was truly calamitous, as it had caused miscalculations about ammunition, carriage, hospital stores, and everything necessary for a campaign. All these things were left behind at Delhi or Agra; and the desperate necessity of winning a battle was only enough barely to save the day. The advantage was with the British in the battle of Moodkee, but not so decisively as all parties had expected. After a junction with reinforcements, the British fought the invaders again on the 21st and 22nd, at Ferozeshur. On the first night our troops were hardly masters of the ground they stood on, and had no reserve, while their gallant enemy had large reinforcements within reach. The next day might easily have been made fatal to the English army, at times when their ammunition fell short; but the Sikhs were badly commanded at a critical moment, then deserted by a traitorous leader, and finally driven back. For a month after this nothing was done by the British, and the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej at their ease. The valour of Gough and of Hardinge, who, while Governor-General, had put himself under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, had saved the honour of the English; but their prestige was weakened among their own Sepoys, and even the European regiments; much more among the Sikhs; and most of all in the eyes of the vigilant surrounding states. It was a matter of life and death now to bring up guns,

ammunition and treasure. A considerable portion fell into the enemy's hands on the 21st of January, on its way to the relief of Loodeeana; but the battle of Aliwal on the 28th was again a true British fight. The Sikhs were driven into the Sutlej; and as soon as they had collected in their stronghold of Sobraon on the other side, they were driven thence by a closing struggle on the 10th of February. The Sikhs were beaten, with a slaughter of 5,000 (some say 8,000) men, against 320 killed and 2,000 wounded on our side. The Maharajah submitted, the road to Lahore lay open, and the Governor-General could make his own terms. He flattered himself that he had arranged a protectorate of the Punjaub which would render annexation unnecessary; and all who could believe in it rejoiced that means had been found to escape the necessity of adding new conquests to a territory already much too large. As the Punjaub could not pay its amount of tribute to the Company, Cashmere and some other territory was accepted instead, and given, as a kingdom, to Gholab Singh (whose death we have just heard of) on his paying a portion of the debt, thus reimbursing the Company, and lessening the overgrown power of the Punjaub rulers. When, at the close of 1846, the English troops should be withdrawing from Lahore, the Sikh chiefs begged that they might remain, and take care of the Punjaub till the young Maharajah should grow up to manhood. The sub-

sequent events are fresh in all memories — the murder of Messrs. Agnew and Anderson, the siege of Mooltan, the difficulties and threatenings which made it necessary to send out a commander of the highest order from England, and the despatch of Sir Charles Napier to fill that function — Wellington saying, in reply to his plea of age and ill-health, "If you do not go, I must." Sir Charles Napier found the war at an end when he arrived; and none of us forget, and history will not forget, the kind of service he did render in reforming the Indian military service, and offering warnings of the very catastrophe under which we are now mourning. He was rebuked and compelled to resign, in consequence of his treatment of Sepoy mutiny occurring under his own eyes, and within the sphere of his command. Service of this kind we owe to his mission of 1849; but the annexation of the Punjaub was completed before his arrival, as the consequence of treacherous rebellion first, and, next, of the series of victories by which it was punished. The proclamation by which the Punjaub became annexed to the Company's territories was dated March 29, 1849.

The Governor-General who issued this proclamation was Lord Dalhousie, who succeeded Lord Hardinge in 1847. In this case, he merely completed Lord Hardinge's work; but before he returned, in 1855, he achieved an annexation which is inseparably connected with his name. We need do little

more than insert the annexation of Oude in its connection with the history of the English in India, while the mother of the deposed King is in London, and her son in imprisonment at Calcutta, on suspicion of a participation in the existing revolt. Our readers must know, as well as we could tell them, why he was deposed; and recent newspapers must have told them what it is that his representatives in London allege and desire. It is enough, therefore, to notice a few facts of a prior date.

We have seen how early some relations of a subsidiary kind existed between Oude and the rulers of British India. Above half a century ago, some portions of territory, the Doab and others, were ceded to the Company, in lieu of omitted payments; and the whole transaction was repeatedly discussed in Parliament, at the instigation of Lord Wellesley's enemies, and other critics of Indian proceedings. It was understood to be established by those discussions that the military defence of Oude could at no time since the English ruled in Bengal have been maintained otherwise than by British aid; that the princes of Oude were kept on the throne by British assistance alone; that the misgovernment of those princes rendered the payment of their dues to us impossible; and that no resource remained against external invasion and internal ruin but the support afforded by the English, their intervention in ruling, and their obtaining the

means by taking territory in payment of debts. From time to time since, there have been disclosures, the truth of which seems to be undisputed, of a kind and degree of corruption existing in the administration of Oude which could never have been exceeded in any age, and under any rule. There is no question of the fatuity and monstrous vice of the sovereigns, nor of the degradation and misery of the people, nor of the gradual extinction of all the means of social virtue and happiness within the territory. Our readers have probably seen various recent works of travel which show something of what the Court of Oude long ago became, and of the contrast its territory has presented with the prosperity of far less fertile lands under the Company's control. Before that territory was released from the tyranny of its native ruler, the people were escaping from it with every opportunity of absconding. Within a single generation, districts which had bloomed like a garden had become unable to support a twentieth part of the human life which had subsisted there; and when the starving people strove to escape into the Company's territories, it was at the risk of being pursued and hunted like slaves. Of the 200,000 Sepoys recently serving in the Company's forces, 40,000 were from Oude alone, refugees from the oppr n at home. When the Sovereign h become ine: y involved in debt, and wholly his obligations

to the Company, and when, at the same, time the whole kingdom was sunk in discontent and wretchedness, Lord Dalhousie caused the King's deposition, gave him wealth sufficient to gratify his desires and accord with his habits, and placed the country under British administration. It was done without bloodshed, without apparent resistance, and evidently to the prodigious relief of the people. If there was anything wrong about it, the public will soon know it; but the act has been and will be abundantly discussed in connection with the existing revolt, of which some consider the annexation of Oude the proximate cause. As so many of the Sepoys come from Oude, there may be some such connection between the facts; but, as far as we know, no evidence has been brought forward to show that the people of Oude desire their Sovereign back again, or express any wish to fall again under the pressure of his extortions, or be presented again with the spectacle of his corrupt court. The truth will be ascertained, speedily and certainly; and meanwhile we have only to fit that territory into the map of our Indian possessions as it is now drawn on our interior conceptions. It is a splendid country for its natural advantages and its traditional grandeur. Its capital, on which our eyes now wait so anxiously for the coming forth of a thousand of our countrymen and countrywomen, vies with the capitals of Europe in numbers and splendour. As it is the

last, so it is about the richest of our acquisitions; and its recent condition is as fair a warning as we could have of what must become of India, in the most peaceful times, if our civilizing and dispassionate rule were withdrawn.

We have now traversed the areas of space and time which lay before us when we began to survey the compass of our Indian history. We have seen the first trader at his landing, and have now witnessed the entrance into fellow-citizenship with us of the multitude whom the rulers of Oude have driven from their own allegiance to ours. It is a strange and unparalleled history, and will utter its own moral. We shall only unfurl the scroll once more, just to see what the various inhabitants of this mighty country were doing—how they were living—at the moment when the present revolt broke up the whole order of society.

CHAPTER XXI.

MODERN LIFE IN INDIA.

1857.

"The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below."—CAMPBELL.

"In the evening one may praise the day."—*German Proverb.*

"Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey."—GRAY.

IT would require a volume to exhibit the modes of living of the inhabitants of Hindostan in their wonderful variety; but a few pages may suffice to supply outlines which may be better than a blank.

There are many sequestered places in India—even in the Deccan at this day—where the inhabitants have never seen a European. They have heard of the British, of course; and in every hamlet there is somebody whose father or grandfather was engaged in some war prosecuted by the English, or had stood by the wayside to see the white-faced strangers go by. On the strength of what they have heard, they have made public games and dances in imitation of British manners, about as faithful as the representation of an English lady's dancing which Charles Metcalfe saw in the Ghauts. We have near our

own shores (in Ireland) an Island where the people clothe and worship a stone, and pray to it for wrecks; and their notion of "the Saxon" is somewhat unlike the Saxon's own: and in the same way, in the hollows of the Ghauts, and in the wilds of Malwa, and the swamps of Eastern Bengal, and the hill-passes leading into Nepaul, there are whole settlements in which a white face has never been seen, and where the Saxon's mind and manners are wholly misapprehended. Here the people are living as they can, with always plenty to complain of, like the rest of the world, but with this marked feature, that there is always most to complain of where the Europeans have not been. In one place there is tyranny and corruption among the village officials, and the poor cultivator protests against extortion, while the hereditary office-holders appeal in their turn against the hard hand of the native collector, or the encroachments of some neighbour. On the whole, tillage improves, probably, and old men tell of land being won from the jungle; and there are strange rumours afloat that ere long there will be no more famines, because there will be water within everybody's reach, and also ways of bringing the surplus grain of one place to the empty granaries of another. The dread is, that when the poverty is lessened the security will be lessened too. Will not the hill-robbers come down, and roast the people's feet, or otherwise torture them, till they have got all

the wealth of the place, or satisfied themselves that there is none? Thus is the native rural life passed between hope and fear, alternate hunger and fulness, with strifes and amusements to pass the time.

Elsewhere there are wide barren plains where the sight of Englishmen is common enough; but always as travellers. Within the vast horizon there are innumerable groups of ruins, showing that this sandy desert was once covered with cities. The existing race live in huts built in among these ruins, and in their daily business pass through marble colonnades, seeing pillar after pillar crumble and fall; or they thread a labyrinth of tanks full of dust, and unroofed mosques. Here and there some gilding glitters under the sun, and snowy cupolas or parapets seem to cut clear into the deep blue sky, while only the birds go in and out, and wild creatures harbour among the rubbish. Here the Europeans come, either to explore, or on their way to some native court, or their own Residency. Their presence is very imposing, from the length and obsequiousness of their train of followers. Sometimes the stranger attends to the sick; and at all events the sick try the experiment whether he will or not. Sometimes he will hear their complaints, and may be going his rounds to observe the state of affairs, and redress abuses. But occasionally he comes only to explore the ancient buildings; and then it is a lucky day for the oldest inhabitant, or the one with the

best memory, who can tell what race built here first, and what became of the Hindoos when the Moguls came upon them, and which mosques were built by this, and which by that Mohammedan ruler. In some of these ruined cities there has been such a jumble of faiths up to our own time, that Mussulman inhabitants have offered up flowers and other sacrificial articles forbidden in the Kurán, while the poor Hindoos worshipped in the mosques, supposing it to be all right to do homage in any sacred place. Elsewhere the desecration is from ignorance on the other side. It is naturally impossible for the superior race, in such cases, to begin ruling with any adequate knowledge of the minds and circumstances they are dealing with. Above all, this mischief must exist when the subordinate race has been surprised in that stage of civilization in which the religious, political, and social institutions are mutually incorporated. There is a period in the progress of every race and people when the priests are, *ex officio*, rulers, warriors, legislators, physicians, and scholars; and it is then impossible to touch any part of the polity under which they live without affecting all the rest. In such cases, the most benevolent arrangements, and the best-intended reforms, may make eternal enemies of the subject people, or break their hearts. Passing over the dreadful instances of injury caused by mere levity, as that of some giddy soldiers compelling a Brahmin to swallow one drop of beef

broth, when all the powers of ecclesiastical and civil Government were inadequate to retrieve the sufferer from perdition, there is worse behind, in the shifting of inheritances, and other arrangements of the British, which seem good, and just, and benevolent to them, but are absolutely fatal to those whom they affect. The wisest know little yet of the political and social operation of the worship of ancestors among the Hindoos at this day. In a general way, the English see that the bachelors among themselves are regarded with a disgust and contempt barely covered by respect for their power; and that married men without sons are objects of compassion. They see this, and they inquire about those observances which they must never witness—the oblations to ancestors—and then, not dreaming of any connection among such things, they decree changes in hereditary rights and customs, alter successions, deprive heirs and set up new ones, try to abolish infanticide, and so on. They explain the principles of justice on which they proceed, and trust they are gaining confidence and reputation, while they are cursed by victims whom they have unconsciously doomed to excommunication here and perdition hereafter. No small amount of Mahratta hate has been brought upon us in this way; and there have always been by-places where Brahmins have been fomenting discontent, and reciting curses against the Christians, while their other conquerors, the Mohammedans, have been uttering

daily prayers, for a hundred years, that the Delhi race of sovereigns might be restored, and the Europeans driven from the country. But a few months ago, while our rule in India was apparently unassailed, and even unquestioned, it was a subject of nightly talk—from under the eaves of English bungalows to the deepest recesses of Hindoo temples—that our impiety must overthrow us; that the first of religious truths was the Family being the basis of the State, ancestors being an eternal race of gods, and sonship an eternal institution; whereas the British do not take care of their ancestors, nor religiously provide heirs, while they impiously meddle with succession, even making changes in royal families, and among groups of princes like that of the Mahratta chiefs. Thus has the Brahminical mind been seething and boiling under that external homage which was, to the last moment, paid to British superiority and power.

Elsewhere there has been an opposite state of mind growing up, under the irresistible influence of material improvement. Low down in the Madras Presidency, there was misery, a quarter of a century ago, which could scarcely be surpassed. The rivers had long been neglected, and they were emptying or choking one another; swamping good land in one place, and drying it up into mere desert in another. The inhabitants dwindled away in numbers and resources, and when a famine occurred they lay

down and died. Then came in British knowledge and capital—deepening a stream here, embanking another there; regulating and distributing the waters with scientific foresight, so that they improved their own channels from year to year. Then crops sprang up over scores of square miles, and the revenue was greater than it had ever been, and the cost was repaid, and land sold for rising prices, and inhabitants covered the country, till the whole region was as populous as Belgium or Lombardy. Such were the results of the British works on the Cauvery and other rivers of the Deccan, where the ancient apparatus of irrigation had fallen into ruin. Analogous improvements in the west and north have as yet been too new to attach the inhabitants to us so readily as by an immediate benefit like that of irrigation. Under the western Ghauts the villagers come out at the sound of the steam whistle, and the babies gasp and cry as the train rushes by; and nobody denies that the railway is a wonderful thing: but the question is whether it is right; and very few are aware of the bearings of the invention. In Hindostan Proper, we know, there has been a controversy for years as to how far the accommodation of the rail will lessen the merit of pilgrimages: and this is symbolical of the whole contest between the two degrees of civilization which have come into open conflict. The great fundamental condition of goodness of every sort—patient

slowness—seems to the Hindoo to be overthrown by our inventions. Immutability, patience, indolence, stagnation, have been the venerable things which the Hindoo mind hated the Mussulmans for invading with their superior energy; and now what is Mussulman energy in comparison with ours, judged by our methods of steaming by sea and land, and flashing our thoughts over 1,000 miles in a second! For many months past the priest class had filled all others with fear of the new *régime* of the arts, before any English ear caught a word of anything but admiration and amazement. Still, wherever land became more valuable, and crops more abundant, and new markets were opened, and the oppressions of native rulers were checked, and any way was opened to new knowledge, and higher social consideration, our rule was valued, and our continued presence desired, whatever might be said by Brahmin or Mussulman. We have seen something of this lately in the succours which have been given in the villages to our helpless fugitives; and we shall see it more when the people are disabused of their notion that our rule is over. Perhaps they do not know so well as we do how wretched their condition would presently be if the English were really to withdraw; but they have a sufficient share of human reason to perceive how much better their fortunes are than those of their fathers; how far they have recovered already from the consequences of internal

warfare, and what they may expect from such a permanent condition of peace as can be secured only by English rule.

While the grain fields, and the poppy, indigo, flax and cotton cultivation were going on of late so cheerily, what was doing in the towns? In Bombay, more than half the commerce is in the hands of Parsee merchants, while natives fill the chief professions with respectable ability and learning. These classes of natives throughout the country have nothing to learn of us in regard to the pursuits and enjoyments of life. They have among them men of piety, of philosophy, of science, and of patriotism and benevolence. Throughout the interior such men distinguish all the great towns as much as the Presidential ports. The grand difficulty is, as it has always been:—what relations are these superior natives and the British to bear to each other in time to come? Are they to be always apart, as men of such different races, minds, faiths, and customs, must apparently be? and if so, which is to rule? The leading men of all the native races declare that, notwithstanding our beneficent reforms and our good institutions, we know them less, and care for them less, than our predecessors did; and the more they appreciate and share our enlightenment, the less can they perceive any prospect of partaking our social advantages. They are fully aware, no doubt, of the benefit of our new native

schools, and of every effort made by Anglo-Indian statesmen to promote study, preparation for office, freedom of the press, and literary enterprise; and yet they assert that the English know and care less about their affairs, value their friendship less, and discourage approximation more than was the case in the days of their and our grandfathers. Whether this impression is more or less true, it exists; and how to deal with it will be the most important question of all when we are again free to plan for the social amelioration of India.

It is impossible to do more than glance at the religious world of Hindostan. The monstrous and frivolous rites and decorations of the Hindoo temples still look like a burlesque on the ancient heathen idolatries of Europe; and Mussulman worship is pretty much the same everywhere. There are the mosques, with their simple observances veiling an impassioned fanaticism; and the Moslem schools, where a whole generation of boys spend long years and a world of energy on words—a gabble of formulæ which does little more than prepare them for a further future study of words. However, they were taught something remarkable a few months ago—that they were living in a great and glorious age when the Prophet's true princes would be restored, and the "damned Christian infidels" would be victimised for the honour of Islam. It seems as if the Mussulman boys of India had been inspired

recently with much the same feeling as animated the little daughters of Judah at the time when the expectation of the Messiah was most intense; and in this case the expectation has been sustained by the most magnificent fictions about the decline and fall of Britain under the hostility of the Sultan of the Porte, the head of their religion. When the British indigo-planter, or merchant, or military or civil officer, passed near the school whence issued the unique vociferation of Mohammedan schoolboys, and saw them balancing themselves on their haunches, with their tablets before them, he little imagined how he was regarded by these young zealots, as the victim about to meet his doom. The same might be said of the way in which the wise and bold English were regarded wherever the higher orders of Hindoos were collected. If the British discovered their approaching misfortune anywhere it was in the army. It is a good many years now since Sir Charles Napier, and other officers who had courage to speak out, gave warning of the changed temper of the sepoys; and it will probably appear hereafter that the disclosures were not neglected, but that the disaffection was seen to be so wide-spread, and felt to be so unmanageable, that the whole case was left to fate. Time may reveal what were the anticipations of the outgoing and the incoming Governor-General, when Lord Dalhousie gave place to Lord Canning in 1856.

As to the apparent features of the disaffection, a

few months since, we have all heard so much that we need say but little. The Bengal sepoys had long been growing unmannerly; and a more significant symptom could not be in high-bred Asiatics. They treated their European officers with disrespect; they objected to orders, and actually refused some kinds of service, and made conditions about others; and in all cases they were indulged. It is no part of our business here to judge or censure; but only to present the phenomena of the Indian case. A few months since the soldiery were in a loose and infirm state of mind as a body; now suspicious of their officers, and now devoted to them, as the idea of personal danger arose. One hour they admitted the cartridges to be harmless; and the next they were suspicious of every movement of every Christian. Meantime, running messengers were carrying the mysterious little cakes from village to village, from barrack to barrack; and where they had passed no confidence grew up again. Sometimes an order came from the ex-King of Oude, or, what was the same thing—in his name. Sometimes it was the Emperor at Delhi whose commands they received. And thus, vigilant by day, and conspiring at night, went on the Mohammedan soldiery.

As for the Hindoos, they were perhaps more deeply alienated still. They had a double conquest to avenge; and there can be little doubt that such men as the Rajpoots were convinced that, once having

expelled the British by Mussulman aid, they could soon get rid of Mogul rule too—considering that the Mohammedans are computed to form only one-eighth of the population of India at this day. We can have no inclination to dwell on what these men were doing and thinking within the present year, after the way in which they have acted out their thoughts and their will. Our readers can imagine them for themselves, on the parade ground, with their passions well-buttoned down under their uniform, or in their secret conclaves, when they whispered their disgust at Christian immoralities (as they are pleased to call celibacy and the position of our ladies), and their horror at the number of souls that these Christians had, with the best intentions, sent to perdition hereafter through the purgatory of excommunication here.

That country, like every other, is peopled mainly by an ignorant industrial class, whose movements are the most important while the least attended to. They may be best observed, perhaps, outside the gates of great towns, on market days, when the country people are pouring into the city. Above, the minarets and shining cupolas are seen rising from a mass of foliage—of sycamores, acacias, palms, tamarinds, and banyan trees; below runs a broad river, between grassy banks, or sandy shoals; and midway are crowds of people crossing the bridge, or hurrying along the bank, with their piles of fruit and loads of grain, while the bazaars within are so

thronged that horsemen cannot get through without risk of manslaughter. In the private dwellings, servants abound to an extent unknown in Europe, every office having its own functionary. There is, therefore, a vast amount of lounging. In the bazaars there is a rapidly increasing variety of commodities, introduced by the freer trade of modern times; and this extension of industry has been supposed to have attached the lower classes to our rule by improving their condition and prospects. In the rural districts many more than formerly are busy in the fields; and a great number were plying their tools on the railways but a few months ago. This picture of hopeful industry we may trust to see restored. At the other end of the social scale, there was lately, as in all former time, a spectacle which no civilized man can look at with pleasure; that of the courts of the native princes. Within the white walls of those old palaces, there are scenes transacting which are too disgusting for description, or for conception by untravelled Europeans. A prince, half-idiotic through corrupt descent, corrupt rearing, corrupt ideas, habits, and examples, reigns within, indulging all the humours of tyranny and licentiousness; his domestic apartments are crowded with wives and concubines, abject to him and ferocious towards each other; his state officers are merely nominal, serving only as means of extorting money from his helpless subjects, without giving them any

of the benefits of government; and his household offices are filled by adventurers, intent only on their own convenience at everybody's expense. The alternative is probably between a rapid fortune of 100,000*l.* and loss of the head at any moment. The one certainty is of a catastrophe, sooner or later, in which the whole concern collapses. Debt, embarrassment, dependence, are the mildest forms of the issue; and treason within the palace, and rebellion outside, are always impending; while everybody knows that the English will be called in, as sure as fate, when the state of affairs is too bad to be longer endured. This scene, so often repeated, was last enacted in Oude, where the revenue had long been collected only within cannon range; where only one-third of the amount ever reached the sovereign; where millions of acres of fertile country were lapsing into jungle; and where tens of thousands of strong men entered the British army, while their families escaped to regions where no imbecile tyrant would have power over them. A few months ago there were insane exultations going forward in such palaces—an emperor here, and a king there being assured that their old power was coming back to them, and that soon no troublesome Englishman would interpose between them and their subjects, or prevent their gathering all the wealth of the country into their own laps. Now, we may fairly hope, there is terror and anguish in those palace-chambers, when the truth cannot be

concealed that the *raj* of the British is not over, and that traitorous princes are not permitted even to make terms of surrender.

What were the Europeans doing a few months ago? First, there were the settlers; planters of indigo, sugar, and cotton; merchants collecting and selling the native products; managers of public works, from the superintendents of the Ganges Canal, near the base of "the verdurous wall" of the Himalaya, to the engineers of the Cauvery works at the other extremity of the Peninsula. Some lived in isolated abodes, cottages deeply thatched, with wide eaves and broad verandahs, amidst gardens shady with tropical verdure, gay with blossoms, and fragrant with such English flowers as can be coaxed to grow there. Far north there are tea plantations, divided by hedges of Persian roses. Amidst the young rivers which are to be bridged, or joined by canals, the Englishman lived in woods tangled with vines, noisy with monkeys, gay with parrots and giant butterflies, and harbouring the tiger and other rude neighbours. These English, whether civil or military, were regarded as a sort of natural princes. On their journey their bearers cried out, "Make way, for we have a great lord within;" or, if they travelled by the humblest cart, the Sepoys they met faced about and gave the military salute, while the peasants almost prostrated themselves in the roads. In the town the way was cleared for them, in the

thick of the market; and in the country all yielded to their convenience. No doubt, every European of them all would have gladly exchanged all this obeisance for a better quality of industry and improved truthfulness and fidelity; but we are telling what things were, and not what they were wished to be. The mode of life of the civil servants of the Company was externally much the same, with the added features of social companionship and institutions, and especially a church, where there were Europeans enough to constitute anything like a public. But there was a probation of solitary up-country life usually to be gone through first. The young Englishman lived alone, collecting revenue, administering justice in small matters, and bearing the *ennui* and the climate as well as he could. If he was wise, he used his opportunities for studying the people, their language, mind, character, and interests, and for improving his knowledge in all collateral ways, as a preparation for higher office. If he was high-couraged, he made himself a benefactor to multitudes, and a terror to wrong-doers. If he was weak, he pined. If he was vulgar, he smoked and drank, and gave the climate every advantage over him. If he was sentimental, he wrote his autobiography or reams of poetry. If he was frivolous, he frittered away his time and opportunities, his health and his small means.

As for the military European settlements, they are

so prominent a feature in all sketches of the country, by pen or pencil, that little could be told which is not already known. The cantonments at Agra, consisting of civil and military lines, occupy the space of a large city—five miles by two—with broad, smooth roads, a park, a church, and large edifices for Government and commercial purposes. At Meerut there were all the usual advantages, with remarkably luxuriant gardens, from the abundance of good water. At Cawnpore, the broad Ganges rolled in front of the British residences, for five miles of scattered houses and gardens lining the steep river bank. From under the shade of spreading trees, and amidst the gorgeous flowers of the region, the residents looked across the muddy river, alive with traffic, to the low white beach beyond, and the wide-spreading plain, all green with springing crops, or hazy with heat. Here, as we too well know, lived ladies and children; and at most of these principal settlements were missionaries, American or European. There were Christian schools and services; there was duty, civil or military, for the gentlemen; and the ladies visited one another, and took evening drives and early morning rides; and all were hospitable to travellers. No one doubted the faithful attachment of the people generally, however painful might be the occasional suspicion of the soldiery. As to the missions, every diversity of opinion seems to exist

about their influence and success. They were private enterprises, one and all. The Government afforded Christian institutions to its Christian servants, and to all who desired to make use of them; but all proselytism was absolutely forbidden to the Company's agents. The one thing about which honest people can have no doubt is, that such being one of the conditions of the Company's service, no Government officer, civil or military, was at liberty to attempt the conversion of natives, either himself or through any of his family. On all other points more evidence is required before any trustworthy decision can be arrived at in England. Some believe the conversion of a great number of natives to be genuine, and of a permanent character; others declare that it is a matter of imitation and deference—sincere on the part of the convert, as an act of duty, but without any notion of conviction of the judgment or renovation of the heart; while others again believe the whole process to be one of self-interest. Some agreement must be arrived at, and a new, definite, and firmly-grounded policy must be chosen as the very basis of our government of India henceforth. Meantime, while our cantonments still existed, as the homes of the British in India, the schools were open on week-days, and the church on Sunday; and the residents felt, so far, as if at home.

Among the interests of those residents were sectional

jealousies which cannot be altogether passed over in any sketch of Indian life. The British of the Three Presidencies have always sparred at each other, like the adherents of rival political parties, rival churches, rival industries, rival public services all over the world. The mutual repulsion has not been anything like that of the northern and southern states of America, or that of Mohammedans and Hindoos, and both these and the Sikhs in Hindostan: but it has been enough to give some of its colour to life in India. The Madras officer quizzes the *Qui-hi*—the Bengal officer—caricatured as dependent on his servants, whom he summons with his "*Qui-hi?*" ("who is there?") all day long. The retort is by calling the Madras men *mulls*—the caricature being, in that case, of a perpetual feeder on mulligatawny. Both assume airs towards the Bombay service, which has its own reasons for valuing itself. In an hour of peril, no doubt all such strifes give way; but the mutual contempt or dislike of the three services must be taken into the account, both in the conception of life in India, and in forming judgments at home on Indian affairs from the testimony of witnesses who know most about them as matters of fact.

There remains the capital. By all accounts, there are few things finer than the approach to Calcutta by the Hooghly from below. The spaces, both of land and water, are so grand—the woods below and

the edifices higher up so magnificent, and the character of the residences so unique, as to bewitch the stranger at first sight. There are drawbacks, in the shape of mud huts or bamboo hovels, or mere wigwams set up under the shelter of palace walls; contrasts symbolical of life in India altogether. But it is a gay scene,—life in Calcutta,—and very striking to those who consider that it is the centre of the most prodigious administration existing in the world. Under the direct dominion of the Governor-General there are above 23,000,000 of people, living on 240,000 square miles of territory; while under the British rule in the three Presidencies there are no less than 132,000,000 of people, occupying 837,000 square miles. These are exclusive of the native states, which are more or less under our influence and control, and the small foreign colonies, French and Portuguese, which must pursue a policy a good deal like our own. The serious business of such an empire is carried on within the imposing public buildings which glare in the Indian sun; and the recreation of the English in Calcutta is according to the old established fashion — of mighty dinners, where the tables groan under the weight of food; of brilliant balls, where the wonder is that the whole body of guests does not evaporate; and of excursions by land and water, where amusement and sport are pursued amidst the comments of crowds of

native observers. What those comments are like, the native papers show; and it is wondered at by Europeans who see them that the insecurity of our rule in India has not been very clearly conveyed by these papers to those whom it most concerned. There is a better public, however, watching us from the outside—the educated natives, who have parted with their old ignorance, their old superstitions, their old pride of race and dominion, without finding themselves adopted into that of the ruling nation. If we knew more of life in India as it is to these people, we might better understand our past, and foresee our future, and might have perhaps escaped the dismal present. They must be the special study of the wisest men among us when our strenuous military action shall have enabled us to resume, in a regenerated form, our civil rule.

At this point our survey of British life in India closes, brief and superficial as it is. The filling-in of our bare outline would be found full of wonder and of interest; and it has been no easy matter to abstain from all presentment of it. The main events were, however, quite enough for our space; and it was a matter of necessity to leave them standing alone, as resting-places for the attention and the memory. The reader now sees how the English entered India, what they found, and what they did there; and, in some degree, what their life was like

till it was broken up by the forces of disaffection like ice in spring. He may thus be enabled the better to understand the meaning and the bearings of the measures which will be taken for the re-affirmation of our empire.

THE END.

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